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JULIAN THE APOSTATE

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THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS OF ITALY.

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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN

JULIAN
THE APOSTATE

BY

GAETANO NEGRI

TRANSLATED
FROM THE SECOND ITALIAN EDITION
BY THE
DUCHESS LITTA-VISCONTI-ARESE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY PROFESSOR PASQUALE VILLARI

ILLUSTRATED

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INTRODUCTION

By way of preface to this excellent translation of Senator Negri's work on Julian the Apostate, it may be well to give English readers a little information regarding the author's personality.

Both intellectually and morally, Gaetano Negri stood above the ordinary level of mankind, and the course of his life was equally uncommon.

There are some historical figures who would have won less renown had their mental grasp been wider; but there are others whose fame would be much enhanced had they possessed less versatility of mind. The former, whose intelligence runs in one groove, being impelled to concentrate their strength on a single point, sometimes achieve unexpected results; the latter, on the contrary, being endowed with many varied powers, are apt to scatter their energies in a number of different directions, and, consequently, no single work of theirs — whatever its merit — can prove the full extent of their mental force. Gaetano Negri belonged to this latter group.

From one point of view he may be said to have been singularly favoured both by nature and

fortune. More than once, however, fortune proved decidedly hostile to him. The son of wealthy parents, he was born at Milan in 1838, and pursued his classical studies at Pavia. He was about to enter the University, when the national War of Independence broke out, and young Negri burned to join the volunteers ; but, yielding to his father's wishes, he went instead to the Military Academy of Ivrea, in order to obtain admittance into the regular army. On being gazetted as a lieutenant, he was ordered to the Southern provinces, and took part in the operations there for the suppression of brigandage (1861–62). That he bravely did his duty is proved by the fact of his winning two silver medals for "distinguished service in the field." He also received a wound, but the bullet did no great harm. At the close of this campaign, which was by no means congenial to a high-spirited patriot like Negri, who only yearned to share in the real struggle against Austrian oppression, he felt so little inclination to continue his military career, that the moment peace was proclaimed he left the army. We presently find him hard at work at Milan in the office of Assessor to the Municipality for the Department of Public Instruction, and from 1884 to 1889 he was the Syndic (Mayor) of Milan.

Thanks to his unceasing activity, penetrating intellect, genuine gift of eloquence, and also to the support of energetic friends of the Moderate party,

he was the real head of the city, and the most influential man within its walls. Staunchly supported by his colleagues, he achieved notable results in the material, moral, and commercial transformation of Milan; for he was one of the first to foresee its coming prosperity and importance.

Before long, however, came one of those changes which are of too frequent occurrence in political life. Negri and his friends had helped to create in Milan a new order of society that now developed entirely new needs and new tendencies. So, presently, this new society fell out with the very men who had given it being. This turn of affairs was mainly due to the steadily growing influence of the Socialist party that had leapt to life in this centre of trade and industry.

Step by step, Negri and his colleagues, who shortly before seemed to be absolute masters of Milan, were thrust more and more into the background, until at last they counted for nothing in the new city they had so largely helped to create. Now, they were branded as *consorti*,[1] reactionaries, and even as *blacks*.[2]

The present writer once asked Senator Negri to explain the cause of this strange phenomenon, and he said in reply—

"It's a turn of the wheel! In former days we

[1] *I.e.*, members of the so-called *Consorteria*, a clique accused by its opponents of an exclusive regard for its own vested interests.

[2] *I.e.*, Clericals and Ultramontanes.

had only to go to the office of the *Perseveranza*, draw up a list of municipal and provincial councillors, and even a list of the deputies to be chosen. All of these, to the very last man, were invariably elected. Nowadays, no candidate of ours is elected. But there is nothing to be done. We are helpless. Later on, perhaps, things may be different!"

Under these circumstances, Negri wisely turned his whole attention to other work, for which it was easy to see that he had a strong natural aptitude. His remarkable speeches in municipal assemblies and in parliamentary debates had given ample proofs of his literary talent. Strange to say, the first published results of his wide and various culture were in the shape of contributions to natural science. For as far back as 1867, when studying under Professor Stoppani, he had written geological essays which had elicited much praise from competent critics. But his true bent was for philosophy and letters, and in this field he worked with persistent ardour to the last day of his life.

He now gave to the world a large number of essays—historical and critical essays—essays on philosophy and on religion. He wrote on subjects of every kind; of every age, whether ancient or modern; of every part of the world.

But it cannot be denied that no one could possibly discourse on so many different themes without

occasionally betraying incomplete equipment in some subject or another. More than once, of course, in the eyes of special experts, Negri must have appeared to be rather a dilettante than a professional man of learning. Yet all his productions, while proving the width and variety of his acquirements, likewise abounded in shrewd judgments and original appreciations, expressed with the vivid eloquence that is the natural offspring of earnest thought and conviction. For this reason, many of us believed that our friend Negri was the destined founder in Italy of the species of historical and critical essays which, while so general elsewhere, is comparatively unknown in our own country.

Although Negri continually strayed from one subject to another, there was one to which he always recurred with such special zest that it appeared to be his dominant thought, *i.e.*, the religious question of man's final destiny, or—as he expressed it—"the problem beyond the grave." The tendency of his nature led him to ponder repeatedly over this question.

In his youth, the study of Renan's works had made the deepest impression on his mind. The fascination of the master's style had subjugated him and destroyed his faith in religion, but had, nevertheless, stimulated his desire to solve by force of reason the very problem that religion had solved by faith. Even as a confirmed rationalist he continued to feel great respect for existing

religious beliefs, recognising the irresistible yearning for faith that is common to all mankind. Sometimes, indeed, one might have said that here was an unbeliever who had a belief!

Accordingly, Negri's adversaries were not altogether mistaken when they charged him with holding contradictory ideas. In fact, he was dragged this way and that by two opposing currents. But, on every point, he was so truly in earnest, that the strife within his soul gave birth to a wealth of ideas expressed in streams of hotly eloquent words.

His favourite heroes were the great unbelievers who, on their conversion, became great apostles; the great philosophers who had sought to make a religion of their philosophic creed. He studied and re-studied these typical figures, entered into their spirit. One of his dreams—or illusions—was that, at some future day, religion and philosophy, faith and reason would be brought into perfect reconciliation.

He made repeated studies of Marcus Aurelius, St. Paul, and St. Augustine, eulogising the latter as the founder of the Catholic Church. But then he would add that "the *formulæ* of St. Augustine had ceased to have any meaning for us; that only the man himself is immortal; the youth who by studying Cicero at Carthage was first moved to examine the problem of the human soul; the man who while living in a whirl of pleasure and glory at

Milan, went through the sublime internal struggle during which the first revelation of God was vouchsafed to him, and from which he came forth a convinced and zealous Christian."

In spite of his rationalistic creed, Negri has said: "We cannot exclude hope. Reason fails to impose on us the painful duty of stifling those confused, but overpowering aspirations which rise from the innermost depths of our being. So to live, so to die, as though hope were a reality, was the rule observed by Socrates, and is still our highest counsel of perfection."

The first time that Negri's pen converted a critical essay into an elaborate work filling two volumes was when he wrote his analytical study of the novels of George Eliot. This illustrious authoress, who after translating Strauss and writing on German philosophy, suddenly proved herself a poet, who after forsaking religion in favour of philosophic free thought was destined to win enduring fame by novels descriptive of clerical life and by psychological studies of religious phenomena and religious types of character, was the writer who evoked Negri's most unlimited admiration. He therefore made the minutest examination of everything she had written, and performed this labour of love with indefatigable energy and care. On finishing the book, he exclaimed: "This is my master-work, but that does not mean it is good work."

In fact, it is in Negri's *Julian the Apostate* that we find the finest fruits of his wide learning, originality, and force of intellect. Concerning the Emperor whose reign lasted less than two years enough information is given by ancient authorities. Also, many important works, based on careful study of those sources, have been given to the world even in the nineteenth century. Hence the main facts of Julian's career are practically well known, nor would it be easy to discover other facts. Nevertheless, Julian the Apostate is still a favourite literary theme, and may so continue for some time to come.

The point that excites our keenest interest in Julian is the psychological problem of his inner nature.

We see this valiant soldier, this noble-minded, highly cultivated, extremely clever man, who respected and loved virtue, hastening, the moment he had ascended the throne, to promote the revival of paganism and compass the overthrow of the already victorious Christian faith. This is the mystery that confronts us, and which we long to have clearly explained. It was this mystery that proved so attractive to Negri, and all the more—if not chiefly — because Julian sought to solve the religious problem by means of the Neo-Platonic philosophy that had suddenly become so widely diffused at the time. The system employed was to develop the philosophy of Plato with an

added infusion of mysticism, of the symbolism of the East. Thus, the new doctrine sounded the praises of the divine idea in the world and in the soul of man, whose highest felicity was made to consist in the contemplation of God. On the one hand, the aim of this doctrine was the rehabilitation of the pagan divinities, although these were to be modified in a philosophic sense and interpreted by symbolic formulæ. On the other hand, however, being already plainly influenced by the action of Christianity, it hoped by the aid of symbolism to be able to reconcile the hierarchy of paganism with the God of the Christians. Julian, being disgusted with the strife and corruption which had already broken out among the followers of Christ, full of enthusiasm for Hellenic learning, and convinced that Christianity would be the undoing of his State, was deluded by the idea of saving his tottering empire by means of a philosophically reformed pagan creed. This was the scheme to which Julian bent the whole force of his nature. It was the merest dream, but a dream with a dash of the heroic. Thus the reader will easily understand why the story of Julian's life appealed to Negri with so overpowering a fascination. To some degree his book is of a popular nature, although based on much patient study of the original sources. After an introductory chapter, with a brief account of those sources, including the writings of the

Emperor himself, Negri first gives an exact and lucid narrative of the events of his hero's career, and then proceeds to enlarge on the nature and value of the philosopher's religious problem, examining it point by point with singular acumen, great learning and sufficient knowledge of the period discussed. Doubtless, here and there, a skilled expert might find something to criticise in the volume. For, more than once, the author indulges in certain exaggerations unsuited to the gravity of so gifted a writer. For instance, at page 265, we find him saying that: "perhaps Christianity might have died out in obscurity, but for Nero's abominable and ill-considered persecutions." Now this is really preposterous! Elsewhere, we discover certain errors of statement, to which others have already called attention. How is it possible, for example, to accept Negri's arguments in favour of the authenticity of Julian's letters to Iamblichus, when their spuriousness has been so decidedly proved by competent judges? Blemishes of this sort, however, do not essentially lessen the historical value of a book that teems with genuine originality—a book, one might almost say, that was *felt* and *lived* by its author. In fact, there was a close bond of intellectual kinship between Negri and his hero, and thus he could thoroughly understand, thoroughly love him. He lived, as it were, with Julian, breathed the same atmosphere, and so entirely identified himself

with the Emperor's times that his readers are likewise transported to that ancient world. This is the secret of Negri's eloquence, this it is that constitutes the chief merit of his book.

One may confidently say that it was in "Julian the Apostate" that Negri first found his true path, and displayed his special aptitude and strength as a writer of history. Thenceforth, he had only to pursue the same path. In fact, he soon began to collect materials for a Life of St. Ambrose of Milan. But—after frequent favours and as frequent desertions—fortune was now to deal him a last and fatal blow.

In 1902 he was spending his summer holidays among the hills on the Riviera. Having discovered during a solitary stroll a specially beautiful point of view, he returned to it with his wife and children a day or so later. While acting as their guide up the mountain track, he suddenly turned round to warn them, exclaiming, "Take care! It's very slippery just here."

As the words passed his lips, he suddenly lost his footing, fell over the cliff to a ledge some twelve or thirteen feet below, and lay there, motionless, as though stunned by the fall. Every effort was made to revive him, but—he slept the last sleep! Thus ended the changeful activities of this high-souled, highly gifted man! Death had claimed him at the very moment of his most

brilliant literary success, and when, in the leisure and peace of private life, he was looking forward to years of congenial labour.

PASQUALE VILLARI.

Translated into English by

MADAME LINDA VILLARI.

PREFACE

In presenting this my new book to my few but courteous readers, it is my ardent desire they should be convinced, as I have stated in my previous works, that I have not the slightest inclination or intention to force my views on others. In my opinion, History has no interest unless treated in a spirit and manner rigorously objective. If the writer avails himself of History to give vent to his preconceived preferences, or constrains facts to justify his theories, he may succeed in writing an eloquent and interesting work, in publishing a libel or composing a romance, but he will never write a history.

These rules are applicable to the history of religions as to all other phenomena of the human mind. The study or the narration of a religious episode should neither be a justification nor an attack, but an impartial, serene, and diligent exposition of facts and the causes which produced them. This purely objective method of criticism should not offend the most delicate conscience, since a religion, whatever its origin, is always in contact with mankind, and is, therefore, necessarily

perturbed and obscured by the human element, and subject to all the vicissitudes experienced by that element, in the course of centuries. Likewise a river which flows clear as crystal from its mountain source, after passing over the depths of the valleys, winding through fertile plains, and traversing populous cities, becomes thick and impure on account of the refuse it has taken up in its course. So if we would experience the full benefit of its salubrious waters, we must ascend to its natural source.

Generally the history of religious facts becomes fossilised, either because of the unreasonable admiration of all, even of that which cannot be admired, as it is the product of the disturbing influence exercised by man, or because of a no less unreasonable aversion to that which should be respected as being the genuine expression of the irresistible aspiration of the human soul towards the Infinite. Especially in those countries where culture is scarce and the critical sense undeveloped, the habit of judging events falsely and exclusively in their relations to a religious phenomenon is very prevalent. In consequence of this narrowness of judgment, it is no longer possible to study objectively the processes of action and reaction through which the human intelligence has passed in its successive adaptations to religious form. It is the human side of the religious phenomenon, it is the observation of the

alteration which religious sentiment undergoes in the intellectual and historical *milieu* by which it is surrounded, that exercises a singular power of attraction over those devoted to the study of the laws that determine the evolution of man and society. He who succeeds in applying to the human conscience, in its relation to religious facts, a lens uncoloured by any prejudice of affirmation or negation, succeeds at the same time in discovering its most hidden fibres and in isolating its most delicate and profound tissues.

The rational being is distinguished from the brute because, by being able to rise by means of his faculties of abstraction and reflection to the conception of cause, he places before himself two problems, from the solution of which must spring the explanation and the *raison d'être* of the universe, the problem of death and that of the existence of evil. Ancient religions gave a vague and uncertain solution to the first, and none at all to the second. Prometheus, who dared to solve this problem, was a rebel whom Jupiter chained on the Caucasus. Ancient religions, inspired by a tendency essentially optimistic, underrated the problem of evil, and failed to realise its far-reaching importance and tragic difficulty. Christianity, the religion of suffering and sorrow, clearly saw and felt this, and did not leave man weeping and terrified before the existence of evil; for, scrutinising the problem of

death, it saw in death the means of redemption from evil. This idea, which was the key to the mystery of the world, seemed divine to humanity thirsting for the ideal, afflicted and downtrodden by triumphant iniquity. This conception gave to Christianity a victory that seems unreasonable to those who are unable to understand that its reason lies in the response of Christianity to the most profound needs of the human conscience. But this idea, having attained the victory over the religions and doctrines that ruled in the ancient world, and having, in its turn, become dominant, has not been able to preserve the purity of its genuine inspiration, and was forced to adapt itself to the world that had embraced it, thereby neglecting that redeeming virtue which had constituted its strength and conquered the heart of man.

The study of Christianity which we now propose to make, begins at the moment when, from the restrictions of secret and isolated recesses, it burst forth, a royal river, over the immense field of the Roman Empire. Flowing over barren ground, and fertilising it anew with its life-giving waters, it assimilated and carried away at the same time a part of the foulness by which the soil had been contaminated.

It was natural at this moment, as there still existed some of those complex forces through which ancient civilisation had risen, that this civilisation should endeavour to rekindle its dying flame, and

taking advantage of the errors committed by Christianity when it became a worldly institution, it should attempt to renew the struggle with the hope of being victorious.

This movement of the antique spirit to oppose once again the invasion of Christianity, and revive the ancient ideals, was personified in a peculiar and enigmatical personage, the Emperor Julian. Now, it is a great advantage for the historian when he finds concentrated, in the focus of a single person, all the passions that have determined the direction, and provoked the attitude, of the human soul in a given moment of its evolution. History is never more living, clear, and reliable than when it is able to exercise itself concerning the individual, and can concentrate in its conscience the direct reflection of the events and ideas diffused in the world. History that wanders from abstraction to abstraction, that moves in the rarefied air of principles and general affirmations, that is a science of *à priori* conceptions, creates, like metaphysics, grand ideals that vanish as soon as they are conceived, like unto those profiles of fantastic figures we sometimes discover in the clouds, driven by a gust of wind across the azure vault of heaven. All science nowadays, the science of man as well as that of nature, is the science of facts. Hypothesis is valueless except as a preparation for the discovery of facts, and theories should follow, not precede, facts. History should therefore be, above all, a research

of facts and a psychological analysis of man. We should reconstruct, as far as possible, in History the human drama, relive in thoughts, in sentiments, and in passions the life of a human being during a specified period of time, and during a specified conflict of hopes and fears, of anger and affections, of illusions and reality.

And this is just what I have attempted to do with a personage as strange and interesting as the Emperor Julian. I do not entertain any prejudice for or against him. I have simply sought to understand him, to scrutinise the motives that impelled him to his insane attempt, to recreate the *milieu* which surrounded him, while examining the world in which he lived, and considering the atmosphere of prejudice in which he had been educated. From such a study there emerges a living figure that is a gleam of light by which we may discover something of the reality.

My aim in writing this book has been purely objective, and it will require a large dose of good, or, I should rather say, bad will to construe it otherwise. He who possesses a critical temperament regards moral phenomena with the same speculative disinterestedness as physical phenomena, with the same absolute impartiality with which the chemist analyses a substance or the astronomer determines the orbit of a celestial body. Sentiment is one thing, reason another. A great deal of the disorder that perturbs human

judgment is caused by men being carried away by sentiment when they should only listen to reason. A fatal error, but one not more fatal than that of those thinkers who believe that reason explains the universe, and, because of their shortsightedness, fail to perceive that it almost always leaves a large realm to the unknown, where sentiment reigns, an absolute and invincible king.

GAETANO NEGRI.

THE BUST OF ACERENZA

Acerenza, a small town in the province of Potenza, is situated on the summit of an isolated mountain rising at the confluence of the rivers Bradano and Signone. Acerenza has the peculiar privilege of possessing the colossal bust of the Emperor Julian. And it is truly an instance of the irony of fate that the bust of the imperial Apostate is placed on one of the highest pinnacles of its Cathedral as the image of the Patron Saint of the town. I believe that precise information was given for the first time regarding this bust by François Lenormant.[1] It appears that Acerenza was one of the few towns that cordially participated in Julian's attempt to restore polytheism. The young Emperor must have been greatly honoured there. A fragment of an inscription legible on a stone employed in the construction of the Cathedral, and which must have belonged to the pedestal of a statue, says, "To the Restorer of the Roman World, to our Lord Claudius Julianus Augustus, eternal Prince"; and a second fragment of a more monumental inscription bearing some of the letters of the name of Julian was read by Lenormant on the threshold of one of the chapels of the Cathedral. It is therefore very

[1] F. Lenormant, *À Travers l'Apulie et la Lucanie*, vol. i. p. 271, and sq.

probable that the marble bust of the Roman Emperor which adorns the summit of the Cathedral was an exact representation of Julian, and that it had been a part of a colossal statue that the inhabitants of Acerenza had erected in his honour. This probability is explained by the circumstance that it is easy to understand how the extraordinary mistake occurred by which the accursed apostate was transformed into a venerable saint. The patron of the Cathedral of Acerenza is St. Canius, Bishop of Juliana, in Africa, whose body was brought to Lucania by the Christians who fled from Africa, driven away by the Mussulmans. "Now," says Lenormant, "the relation of the respective proportions seems to indicate that the fragment of inscription in the honour of Julian which forms the threshold of one of the chapels came from the pedestal of the statue. This fragment bears only the letters . . VLIAN . . If, as is probable, the two fragments were taken out of the earth at the same time, the priests of Acerenza between 1090 and 1100, more interested in St. Canius than in the Emperor Julian, completed the mutilated inscription *jVLIANensis episcopus*, and the Apostate was immediately transformed into a martyr and a heavenly protector." This bust of Julian, already interesting because of its curious history, has besides an intrinsic value as a work of art because of its intense vitality and overpowering grandeur. It also seems strange that in an epoch when art was in extreme decadence it was possible to find a sculptor capable of modelling a figure of such simple vigour. The sculptor wished to represent not the

thinker but the soldier. The head is adorned with a laurel wreath, and the body arrayed in the military *paludamentum*. If this is Julian, it is Julian the conqueror at the head of his legions.

I say if this is Julian, because, notwithstanding the affirmative indications of Lenormant, which have recently been confirmed by a celebrated archeologist, Salomon Reinach, in a communication read by him at the "Institut" in Paris, doubts concerning its authenticity still arise in my mind. In the first place, it seems to me impossible that any one even slightly familiar with the writings of Julian could be otherwise than amazed if placed before this image. But how is it? The thinker, the writer who passed all his youth over his books, the philosopher, the subtle and restless theologian, the indefatigable scholar who, even amid the anxieties of war, rose in the dead of night to read his favourite authors and compose his treatise, the Utopian dreamer who only thought of the moral evolution of the world and the creation of a religious State in which he would be the Pontifex Maximus, that he should have the lineaments of an old Roman, of this strong and resolute soldier, robust in mind as in body, of this man to whom we may certainly attribute force of will and vigour of character, but to whom, above all others, would seem extraneous that mingling of ideality and pedantry so characteristic in the mind of Julian? If this be his genuine representation, there was a part of his nature which was not expressed in his face, but remained hidden in the inmost recesses of his soul. In this effigy we can recognise the hero of Strasburg,

the audacious leader of the passage of the Tigris, but in vain we seek the modest and clever writer of the letter to Themistius, the severe moralist, author of the fragments on the Duties of Priesthood, the witty, ingenious, and learned poet of the *Misopogon*.

But let us confront the bust of Acerenza with the written description of Gregory Nazianzen and of Ammianus Marcellinus. As will be seen by those of my readers who may follow me in this work, the portrait traced by Gregory cannot be reconciled in any particular with this portrait bust of a vigorous soldier. Gregory depicts to us a youth subject to convulsions, a sort of epileptic, with wandering glances, a continuous nervous trembling of the neck, with changing lineaments, and of an attitude uncertain and unstable; a most interesting figure, but one that does not possess the slightest vestige of that calm but majestic pride that shines in the face of the hero of Acerenza. It is true that Gregory is inspired by such hatred for Julian that he has depicted him with the intention of caricaturing him. But we must not forget that Gregory had lived with Julian for many months, and sat with him on the benches of the same school; therefore, admitting the possibility of its being a caricature, there is necessarily in all caricatures a slight foundation of truth. We must also observe that Gregory had known Julian when he was very young, before the terrible ordeal of a soldier's life in Gaul had strengthened and transformed him into a man of action, and it is not impossible to imagine a corresponding transformation of his appearance.

The most trustworthy description is that given by Ammianus, who accompanied Julian in Persia, and therefore represented him as he was during the last years of his life. "Mediocris erat statura, capillis perquam pexis et mollibus, hirsuta barba in acutum desinente vestitus, venustate oculorum micantium flagrans, qui mentis ejus argutias indicabant, superciliis decoris et naso rectissimo, ore paulo majore, labro inferiore demisso, opima et incurva cervice, umeris vastis et latis, ab ipso capite usque unguium summitates liniamentorum recta compage." This description of Ammianus can be considered in great part applicable to the bust of Acerenza. There is the soft, curly hair, the singularly brilliant expression of the eyes, and the straight nose. Judging from the photograph that is here reproduced, I do not consider that there is sufficient indication of the projection of the lower lip, there is the strong but not the curved neck, and it lacks the characteristic goat's beard spoken of by Ammianus, and which is, as we will see later, an important *dramatis persona* in Julian's *Misopogon.* To explain this last difficulty, we may state that Julian let his beard grow only after his entrance into Constantinople, and this is so true that we learn from Ammianus that during the first days of his sojourn in that city he had still sent for a barber "ad demendum capillum." Now, if the bust, as it is probable, was made in Constantinople, the sculptor would only have seen on his model an incipient beard, which, however, could not yet have acquired a pointed form. This answer to the objection would certainly be ingenious, but I should

photographs of the bust taken in Acerenza. The one which represents the head in profile is of singular beauty. The perfection of the lineaments, the depth of expression, the manner in which the head is set on the shoulders,—in fact the poise of the whole figure, is such as we should picture the real Julian, thus attributing to him also physically the ideal type of the hero. Looking at this beautiful face, I immediately understood the great sympathy he aroused in the Empress Eusebia. But can this possibly be Julian? Is it not rather an ideal figure moulded by a sculptor of genius who never having seen Julian, and being influenced by flattering descriptions, imagined this to be a true conception of the hero? I must own that the interesting dissertation of Salomon Reinach, notwithstanding its great erudition, has not entirely removed the doubts that assailed me when I first saw the bust of Acerenza, and in this short article I have attempted to justify their existence.

July 1901.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE

INTRODUCTION

In the decadence of the Empire there is no figure more original, more interesting and attractive, than that of the Emperor Julian, and his unhappy fate is well worthy of commiseration. But the ecclesiastical tradition has been terribly inimical to him; it branded him as Apostate, and, with this stigma, condemned him to execration and obscurity. How this happened, it is easy to explain. The Church was stimulated by a polemical intention, and made every effort to render odious the man who attempted to wound it mortally. As is usual in polemics, truth was sacrificed to passion and party interest. The historian and the critic must not, however, permit themselves to be confused or misled by the clamour of polemics; their duty is to anatomise impartially the fact or the man that they have under observation on their dissecting table, and to seek to discover the truth in its essential reality.

Now, it is clear that the denunciations and

calumnies of the Church do not succeed in destroying the peculiar interest in the character and actions of the Emperor Julian. There is no historical subject more attractive and worthy of research than the origin, causes, and consequences of the restoration of polytheism, to which the young Emperor devoted his efforts. These invectives and execrations are ineffectual in concealing the facts, which may easily be substantiated by recourse to history and documents. It is unquestionably true that Julian was a man of exceptional talent, who, having passed his boyhood and youth immersed in study, always aware that, at any moment, his life might be cut short by his dastardly cousin who occupied the Imperial throne, suddenly being invested with supreme military command, in a most desperate position, very soon proved himself to be a general of great valour, and conducted a marvellous campaign, crowned with splendid victories. His public life is embraced in the short period of eight years—from 355, the year in which he was sent to Gaul to resist the German invasion, to 363, when he was slain on the field of battle, heroically fighting the Persians. These eight years were all passed in the midst of tumults and agitations, and were full of adventures and military and administrative preoccupations. Notwithstanding this, the young Emperor, who was doomed to die at thirty-two, never abandoned his studies or interrupted his literary activity, and

found the means and the time to make himself one of the most cultured men of his century, and the last, most brilliant, and most profound writer of the Greek decadence. Austere in his habits, penetrated with high ideals, possessed of a wonderfully versatile genius, excelling in all that he undertook, Julian is a character worthy of the most thorough investigation, and, if we may so express it, a most "suggestive" figure. His attempt to impede the advance of Christianity and to lead the State back to a polytheistic creed was, in principle, an error, and reveals a spirit more influenced by philosophical phantoms than a correct appreciation of the moral and intellectual conditions of his times. There is nothing more interesting than to study the causes which led such a shrewd and brilliant intelligence into such grave errors, nothing more curious than to follow him in his efforts to give life to his ideal; to cull from his lips and his writings the motives that actuated him, the goal at which he aimed, and the hopes and disillusions which he experienced.

The Church has been much more violent in its diatribe against Julian than against the emperors who pursued it *igne et ense.* Nevertheless, Julian, who instituted a systematic reconstruction of polytheism, did not cause one drop of blood to be shed for the principle that was dearer to his soul than his reputation as a warrior or the success of his administrative reforms. On the contrary, as

we shall see, the principles of tolerance and the disapproval of forced conversions were officially proclaimed. The Church, however, was inspired by an unerring instinct. It felt that, after all, persecution would be its most powerful arm, and would eventually lead to victory. The more persecuted, the more powerful. It was prepared fearlessly to combat violence, but drew back in alarm before this youth, who, from the Imperial throne, preached the return to polytheism, in the name of reason and morality. It was something so new and unexpected that they imagined the peril greater than it really was. None of the persecutors of Christianity had ever condescended to consider its essence. It was persecuted because it was supposed to be dangerous to Society and the State; but no one had ever examined it on its philosophical and historical basis. The critical work of Celsus remained almost solitary. Now, suddenly, there appears an emperor, the nephew of Constantine, who declares himself apostate from Christianity, and endeavours to justify his apostasy by proving the unreasonableness and lack of historical basis of a religion which, until then, seemed to have overcome all resistance. Nothing could have been more offensive to the Church, whose domination was even at this period absolute, and which, therefore, did not tolerate the discussion of its authority. Shortly after, the javelin of a Persian relieved it of all anxiety, but did not obliterate the memory of the fearful and

odious attempt, and it tried to revenge itself by covering the name of Julian with opprobrium, and consigning his history and his works to unmerited oblivion.

We will begin our study by giving a cursory glance at the life of Julian. Then we will examine the religious and philosophical *milieu* which surrounded him. We will afterwards consider more fully the efforts which he made to restore the polytheistic cult and the ancient religious ideas. As we proceed, we will find occasion for many interesting considerations on the nature of the religious movements, on the effects that they produced, and on the causes which brought them to their victories and defeats.

The life, genius, and actions of Julian may be studied, from an abundance of testimonies, with a nearer approximation to the truth than is usually possible with the personages of ancient history. Our knowledge is derived, in the first place, from three very trustworthy sources, all three contemporaneous with him of whom they speak: the History of Ammianus Marcellinus, the Discourses of Libanius, and those of Gregory of Nazianzus, and in the second place, and above all, from the writings of Julian himself, which have been preserved, and give a most interesting revelation of his restless spirit.

Ammianus Marcellinus, born, in Antioch, of a

noble family, entered, while yet young, the career of arms ; he attained to high offices, and took part in many important engagements. In 350 he was selected by the Emperor Constantius to accompany General Ursicinus, to whom was entrusted the defence of the East. In 354 he came to Milan with the same Ursicinus, whom he followed to Gaul, to assist in crushing the rebellion of Silvanus. After the latter was killed, he was sent back to the East, where he still was when Julian took the place of Constantius. He was a devoted and faithful admirer of the young sovereign, and accompanied him in his expedition to Persia. After Julian was slain, Ammianus seems to have abandoned his military career, and returned to Rome, where he lived tranquilly, and, as we learn from a letter of Libanius, wrote the History which has come to us in a fragmentary condition. Ammianus Marcellinus is a most valuable witness, because of the serene impartiality of his judgments. As a writer, he was mediocre and heavy from a literary point of view, but conscientious and exact, and an expert concerning military affairs. Although bound to Julian by affection and admiration, he did not allow his feelings to influence his statements, even when these statements were unfavourable to his hero. Ammianus has, therefore, left a testimony in which we may repose absolute confidence. But, a soldier at heart and essentially a man of action, although not a Christian, he could not have felt any

interest in the work of religious restoration instituted by Julian, and so his writings treat almost exclusively of the soldier and the prince. The philosopher and the pontiff only receive a passing allusion in the works of this honest historian. Nevertheless, by his vivid and ingenious description, the figure of the young Emperor is so clearly defined as to awaken, in the reader who closely follows his actions, an admiration, tempered by some adverse criticisms, akin to that which inspired Ammianus.

Libanius was one of the most noted figures of the Hellenic world in the fourth century. Like Ammianus, he was a native of Antioch, and during the reigns of Constantius, Julian, Valens, and Theodosius, the three great centres of the East—Constantinople, Nicomedia, and Antioch — were overflowing with his literary productions; he was a great scholar and an eminent rhetorician. Chosen by the Government as Professor of Rhetoric, he instituted public schools in each of the above-named cities. The youths flocked to him, in order to perfect themselves in that formal art, which constituted the principal literary training of the epoch. An enthusiastic lover of Hellenic traditions, Libanius hated Christianity, and thought that the salvation of the world depended on the return to ancient ideas. He was exclusively a scholar and an orator, absolutely devoid of all philosophical tendencies. His discourses were only exercises of

eloquence, lacking in depth of thought; their chief interest lies in the facts that he narrates, and in the descriptions of their *milieu.* Libanius was an able phrase-maker. By nature he was frivolous, impressionable, and vain; his life, owing to the continuous conflicts with his rivals, was most agitated, and he was obliged to change the seat of his teachings from Constantinople to Nicomedia, thence back to Constantinople, and, finally, to Antioch. He was, by turns, persecuted and exalted, but he always succeeded in triumphing over men and circumstances, because of the great fame he enjoyed, and the authority of his name, which was universally respected by all the celebrated men of his time.

Libanius is nowadays too much forgotten. His numerous writings and his rich collection of letters are, by a happy chance, preserved, in great part, and are among the most living examples of ancient literature, giving a lifelike representation of the society of the Eastern Empire in the fourth century. It is curious to note that the decadence of Greek literature and genius had been less rapid and profound than the decadence of Latin genius and literature. Whilst the latter was totally extinguished, and only revived by the ecclesiastical writers, in the East the flame was kept burning by the most lively centres of intellectual movement and literary traditions, and was so well preserved as to render possible the appearance of such writers

as Julian and Libanius. The last-named of these writers, as I have said, although superficial, is brilliant, and often animated by a pure inspiration, and we find in his discourses many pages of exquisite beauty and feeling, although, as a general rule, they are too long and faulty in composition.

Having known Julian from his youth, if not personally, at least by reputation, and having, as many others, centred all his hopes in him, it was natural that he should hail with enthusiasm the star of the new Emperor as soon as it appeared on the horizon, and he approved and aided with all his might the restoration of Hellenism. We can therefore understand that the sad end and premature downfall of his hopes threw him into a state of profound desolation. In the seven discourses, four of which were written during the brief reign of Julian, Libanius has most eloquently expressed his sentiments of joy and grief. Two of these, the "Salutation," pronounced on the entrance of Julian into Antioch, and the other "To the Emperor Consul," written on occasion of the Consulate of Julian, are hymns of joy at the inauguration of the new Hellenic spring, so greatly desired by the gifted young Emperor. "The Embassy" and the "Discourse on Anger" are destined to reconcile the irritated Julian with the frivolous and *frondeuse* Antioch. Two more, the "Solitary Lament" and the "Necrology," are wails of grief for the death of the Emperor. The

"Necrology" is a true history of Julian. The grief-stricken Libanius relates at length the whole life of the Emperor. It is a vitally important document for those who wish to study Julian and his epoch. The discourse "On Vengeance" was written sixteen years after the death of Julian, and is addressed to the Emperor Theodosius, when he was called by Gratianus to assume the empire of the Orient. Libanius, completely deceived concerning the tendencies of the young and unknown Theodosius, incited him to revenge Julian, as the only means of appeasing the gods, and of inducing them to prevent the eventual destruction of the tottering empire. These discourses of Libanius are a mine of information concerning Julian, but are, above all, precious as a representation of the impression which he produced, and of the atmosphere of sympathy and encouragement which encircled and incited him, and prevented his perception of the truth. Libanius is certainly much influenced by party feeling; a passionate Hellenist, he lacks the unprejudiced judgment that is so admirable in the mediocre, but trustworthy Ammianus Marcellinus. All that Libanius writes must be taken with discrimination or a grain of salt, but, in any case, it is impossible to arrive at a true conception of what Julian was, and of what he accomplished, unless we consult the writings of this devoted friend and ardent admirer.

In direct opposition to Libanius, we find

Gregory of Nazianzus, who with Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, formed the great trio of theologians and orators to whom is due the final triumph of the Nicene orthodoxy. Born at Nazianzus in Cappadocia in 330, Gregory was about the same age as Julian, and they were, for a time, fellow-students at Athens. Gregory was as enthusiastic for Christianity as the other was for Hellenism, and although Julian evidently concealed his tendencies, they were discovered by Gregory, who consequently conceived a most violent antipathy to his companion. This antagonism developed later into the most ferocious hatred. Gregory as Bishop, and, above all, as orator, occupied one of the highest positions in the ecclesiastical world, and this position, augmenting his responsibility, made him implacable towards the enemy of Christianity. Besides, his great culture made him appreciate the extent of the peril that threatened Christianity, on account of the new mode of warfare initiated by Julian. The death of Julian, which was for the Hellenists a terrible and desolating blow, was for the Christians, and, above all, for Christian writers and philosophers such as Gregory, an unexpected and welcome relief, which delivered them from the most dangerous of their enemies, and they raised to heaven a cry of joy. In this cry no note was more exultant and pitiless than that of Gregory, which resounds in the two defamatory discourses—

the two monuments of infamy, as he himself calls them—written by him against Julian, when he heard of his death. In these discourses Gregory is not a historian, and still less a judge; he is a terrible disputant, inspired by a fury that deprives him of all clearness of sight and judgment, but a disputant of broad flights and overpowering eloquence. If Libanius represents the impression of exaltation that Julian had produced in the Hellenic world, Gregory expresses yet more vividly the impression of horror produced in the Christian world. The exaggerations of love and hate, of admiration and abhorrence, mutually correct each other, and from them appears the true figure of the man.

It would be impossible to find a more curious example of the relative justice of human judgment. We have before us two men of superior intelligence and great culture; two men among the most noted personalities of their epoch. Both of these men come in contact with a bold and intrepid prince, subjected to the most strange and extraordinary caprices of fate,—a prince who in his short and meteoric career filled the world with the fame of his wonderful achievements. Both these men discuss this Prince, in the most solemn discourses, made after his death, when nothing remains of his works, when it was too late to derive any advantage from praising him, and when abuse of him had lost all polemical interest. However, they are both so

carried away and blinded by passion, that while for one this Prince is a miracle of virtue, for the other he is a monster of ignominy. The disputes concerning him did not cease until long after his death. Of Julian it might truly be said that in life he was

Segno d'immensa invidia
E d'indomato amor.[1]

He had raised a tempest, and its angry waves beat furiously on his corpse, and hurled it on the rocks disfigured and mutilated. What must we do in order truthfully to reintegrate this personality? We must carefully consider all he has said and all that he has narrated of his life, his hopes and his disillusions. Then we shall have a genuine portrait, then we shall recognise the real man, with his marvellous gifts, and his weaknesses, and we shall have liberated our judgment from the passionate execrations of the Christians and the fallacious deification of the Pagans.

Although all Julian's writings have not been preserved, still we possess a sufficient number to enlighten us concerning the real worth of the man and the writer. According to Libanius,[2] he dictated his works very rapidly, and did not allow any of the preoccupations of war or government to interfere with the composition of the discourses,

[1] "Object of undying hatred,—and unconquerable love." Alessandro Manzoni's famous ode, "The 5th of May," on Napoleon the First's death.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] *Libanius*, edition of Reiske, vol. i. 580, 15.

pamphlets, satires, and letters in which he poured, with great natural talent, the wealth of his versatile mind, and which only needed time and labour to perfect them. It is in these writings that we discover the genuine thoughts of this restless youth, who wasted his brilliant and generous soul in a vain chase after shadows.

The writings of Julian are not all of equal value. We have, on the one hand, the panegyrical discourses composed on the sophistical lines of the rhetoric of the schools, which sacrifice art and eloquence to the barren rules of form. They are, as we shall see, the expression of an explicable, but not praiseworthy, opportunism in a young and suspected Prince. There are also his philosophical discourses, a hurriedly composed and poorly organised mass of maxims and symbols gathered from his Neo-Platonic teachings. These discourses are, like the panegyrics, heavy and artificial, and, as literary and philosophical exercises, have in themselves but little value. They are, however, interesting as signs of the tendencies and customs that dominated the schools of the time, and, above all, as a proof of the mystic symbolism with which polytheism was obliged to enfold itself, because of the exigencies of monotheism, and its desire to combat victorious Christianity.

Besides these scholastic exercises, we have the occasional discourses, satires, and letters, in which is evinced a true spirit of originality, whose in-

florescence had not been destroyed by his pedantic education, a spirit which, in every way, evinced a readiness of perception, a genial impressionability, and an acuteness of penetration and judgment that gave to his words the pure ring of truth and sincerity. It is in these writings that we must study Julian, and when we recall that this brilliant writer, at times profound, at times poetic, this acute satirist, this marvellously versatile and gifted thinker, this scholar who was thoroughly versed, not only in his beloved Hellenic literature, but also in the hated literature of the Christians; this passionate and indefatigable reader of Homer, Bacchylides, and Plato, was also the youthful commander whose wonderful military achievements and indomitable valour are described by the faithful Ammianus Marcellinus, we cannot hesitate to affirm that this Prince, notwithstanding the fundamental errors of his life, is one of the most conspicuous figures among those who made famous the fatal decadence of ancient society.

The history of Julian should therefore be compiled from these four sources, which, being contemporaneous, possess an inestimable value. The other accounts of Julian's achievements have reached us either in a condition too fragmentary to be considered reliable documents, or are, for the most part, derived from writers who lived at least a century after Julian, and whose statements are scarcely worthy of belief.

The History of Eunapius may also be read with considerable interest in connection with the study of Julian. Eunapius was born in 347, and may be considered a contemporary witness of the actions of the young Emperor, although he himself says that he was too young to form a correct judgment. Eunapius was a fervent admirer of Julian, and his statements must have given continual proofs of this admiration. But it is because of this that his writings were ruined by blind fanaticism, and reduced to a few unimportant fragments, a loss greatly to be deplored, more especially as he had access to the records of the physician Oribasius, one of Julian's most faithful friends.

But Eunapius has left us in another volume, in the *Lives of the Sophists*, short biographies, or rather, sketches of the principal ones among the Neo-Platonic philosophers, in the midst of whom Julian was educated. Although a very ordinary writer, and unworthy of the treasures of erudition dedicated to him by Boissonade and Wyttenbach, still, as regards the history of Julian, he possessed the incomparable advantage of having been a contemporary. In fact, although he belonged to a generation later than Julian, he was personally acquainted with almost all the men whom he described, and was, besides, a relative and pupil of Chrysantius, one of Julian's masters, and so we derive from him the most valuable information. Reading the lives of Ædesius, Chrysantius, Priscus,

Oribasius, and, above all, that of Maximus, the *Uebermensch* of that little world, we feel ourselves transported into the *milieu* of Neo-Platonic society, and our impressions are much more vivid than those which we gather from historians and critics of later epochs.

Zosimus is another Byzantine historian who is a warm admirer of Julian. He proves the acuteness of his critical sense by deciding that, for a just knowledge of Julian, a supreme importance should be given to the Emperor's own writings, in preference to those from any other source. However, he adds little or nothing to what we have already learned from the narrations of Ammianus. But Zosimus is always an authoritative testimony of the profound impression of greatness and nobility left by Julian during his brief passage on life's stage.

All the ecclesiastical historians who occupied themselves with the character of Julian, excepting Rufinus, lived a century after him. They were thus writing of events that had happened in an epoch distant from their own, in a *milieu* favourable to the growth of legends devoid of all literary judgment, and incited to encourage the prejudices of the public mind, to whom all records of Paganism were odious. These authors cannot constitute for us reliable sources of information. Rufinus, as we have said, lived nearer to Julian's epoch, and wrote the continuation of the Ecclesiastical History of

Eusebius, which he extended up to the year 395. His account of the reaction of Julian is short and incomplete, but it is written in a spirit of relative tolerance, and it appears that he did not know, or if he actually knew, did not endorse, the judgments of the terrible Gregory.

The Arian, Philostorgius, whose works we have only received in fragments, and Theodoretus, in whose writings history is stifled by legend, are thus valueless for the historian of Julian. On the other hand, the narrations of the two ecclesiastical historians, Socrates and Sozomenes, are most important.

Socrates lived towards the middle of the fifth century, during the reign of Theodosius II. He also wrote a continuation of the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius. In his book, which is more interesting as a sign of the opinions of those times than discriminating in respect of facts, we find narrated, with many particulars, the episode of Julian's reaction. Socrates is a conscientious and intelligent historian. The discourses of Gregory certainly exercised a great influence over him, and he refers to many facts either legendary or exaggerated by legends. However, we cannot accuse Socrates of being too harsh in his judgments. In its entirety, the work of this impartial historian cannot be dispensed with by those who desire to study the life of Julian.

Sozomenes lived a little later than Socrates, and re-edited the latter's History, introducing here and

there some new facts, and, above all, intensifying its legendary element. This is not the place to discuss the relative value of Socrates and Sozomenes, but it is an undeniable fact that Socrates, as a literary personality, is much more authoritative as regards the life of Julian. Sozomenes is only to be distinguished from his predecessor by having abandoned his relative moderation.

The life and works of the Emperor Julian are greatly studied by modern historians and critics, and they have given birth to a rich literature. Leaving aside those studies, necessarily brief, which we find in general histories, such as Gibbon's monumental work on the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, or the most recent book of Villari on the Barbarian Invasions, we have numerous essays illustrative of certain phases in the life and thoughts of Julian, and also brilliant articles, as that famous one of Strauss, who takes advantage of the history of the much-discussed Apostate to compose a transparent tissue of allusions to the mediæval tendencies and romanticism of King Frederick William. But until now no book has been written which, taking all criticism into consideration, has endeavoured to review the enigmatical character of Julian, and to represent it under its varied aspects.[1]

[1] I say "until now," for Paul Allard's book, *Julien l'Apostat*, 1899, of which the first volume has just been issued, appears to fill the void.

Among the most noted scholars who have applied themselves to the study of Julian, the first place must be given to Neumann, who, with wonderful shrewdness, was able to reconstruct, from the confutation made by Cyril, at least a part of Julian's treatise against the Christians; a very small part, but most precious because of its knowledge of Julian's thoughts.[1] Naville's work concerning the philosophy of Julian is precise and clear.[2] That of Mücke[3] is rich in facts and valuable for its indications of the humblest and most hidden sources. But the questionable character of the criticism detracts from the value of this laborious work. The recent researches of Kock[4] are most interesting, because they enlighten us about the military achievements of Julian in Gaul, and the relations that existed between Constans and Julian. Vollert's[5] work on the

But it is very difficult to treat the history of Julian with absolute impartiality. If the historian is an ardent believer, it will be almost impossible for him not to be influenced by a preconceived antipathy, more or less concealed, for this audacious rebel, pursued by the execrations of the Church; if, on the contrary, he is a free-thinker, he will attempt to deceive himself concerning the defects and errors of his hero. And it does not seem to me that Paul Allard, although a fair and intelligent critic, will be able to divest himself of a preconceived antipathy because of the orthodox point of view from which he regards and treats the subject.

[1] Neumann, *Juliani Imp. librorum contra Christ. quae supersunt*, Leipzig, 1880.

[2] Naville, *Julien l'Apostat et sa philosophie*, Paris, 1877.

[3] Mucke, *Flavius Claudius Julianus nach der Quellen*, Gotha, 1869.

[4] Kock, *Kaiser Julian, seine Jugend und Kriegsthaten*, 1900.

[5] Vollert, *Kaiser Julians religiöse und philosophische Überzeugung*, 1899.

opinions of Julian is most instructive, his information having been obtained from a variety of sources. Elegant, concise, and embellished with easy erudition is Gaston Boissier's chapter on Julian.[1] But among the modern writings concerning our hero, the two most worthy of consideration, according to our judgment, are first the article of Harnack, in which the great scholar, with masterly hand, traces the profile of the Imperial Apostate and indicates the general direction of his thoughts,[2] and next the book of Rode on the reaction of Julian against the Christian Church.[3] This last is a pamphlet of little more than a hundred pages, but for the thoroughness of its research, the concise logic of its demonstrations, and the almost mathematical precision of its reasoning, it may well be considered a masterpiece. He does not regard Julian in his entirety, but simply studies him from one aspect. The man, the soldier, the administrator, do not appear in this work; we only see the enemy of Christianity, the restorer of Hellenism. Although sometimes, as we shall see, he may exceed the limits which he has laid down for himself, we must, nevertheless, recognise that it would be impossible to master more thoroughly all the factors of an historical problem and represent them in a clearer light.

[1] Gaston Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, Paris, 1894.
[2] Harnack, *Real-Encyclopedie*, "Julian der Kaiser," Leipzig, 1880.
[3] Rode, *Geschichte der Reaction Kaiser Julians*, Jena, 1877.

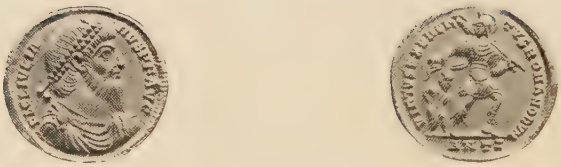
But if I allude to these books (and I could mention many others) because they directly treat of Julian, or of the personages that came in contact with him, and of the burning questions of his day, I wish to add that it is not from these books that mine has been made.[1] I have drawn my information from original sources, and on this evidence have formed my opinions. The strong impression produced on me by the writings of Julian, the peculiar originality of his character, and the possible application of the lessons drawn from his story to the evolution of religious sentiment, induced me to undertake this study, which certainly possesses elements of the most lively interest.

Before we enter into the study of the life and character of Julian, we should again consider the singularity of the historical problem that he presents to our view. For a half-century Christianity had triumphed. Four emperors—Constantine and his three sons — had embraced it and become its fervid supporters. The Church was accustomed to absolute power, and until now no one had questioned its authority. All political and intellectual movements were directed by its bishops.

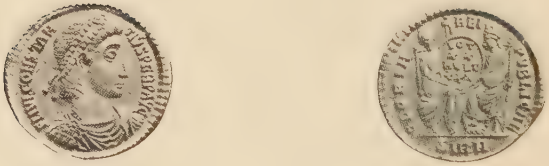
[1] My book was already printed when I saw for the first time a study by Alice Gardner, *Julian, Philosopher and Emperor*, London, 1899. It is a study that affords great pleasure to the reader, elegant n composition, and a complete *résumé* of all Julian's actions. It reveals a just and acute sense of the relative nature and value of the various authorities which have been consulted.

The great dissension between Athanasian Orthodoxy and Arianism was a proof of an organism sufficiently strong and secure to afford the luxury of schism and disunion, which are always indications of an exuberant vitality. If, in the country, with the tenacity of a population distant from the centres in which thought is elaborated, they still persisted in the ancient cult, in the large cities the temples were abandoned, and a great majority of the people were converted to Christianity. In fact, all seemed to indicate a condition of things that rendered impossible a return to the past, and the rehabilitation of a position that was supposed to be definitively abandoned. Then there suddenly ascended the throne of the Cæsars a young emperor, the sole heir of the Imperial family to which Christianity owed its official recognition, and this youth undertakes the restoration of Hellenic polytheism. He is not influenced by the exclusively political ideas of the ancient persecutors, but by a rational conception. He is thoroughly acquainted with Christianity, in which he had been born and educated; also with Hellenism, in which he had been initiated by his readings and the Neo-Platonic studies of his times. He observes and estimates the real effects of Christianity on the morals of the world in which he lives, and, by comparison, arrives at the conclusion that Hellenism is superior to Christianity, that his duty as Emperor is to favour the return to ancient principles, and prevent the

diffusion of a religion that threatens the destruction of a glorious civilisation. Now, when we reflect that Julian possessed a cultured intelligence and a heroic soul, and was, above all, virtuous, we cannot attribute his strange resolution to caprice, frivolity, or vicious impulses. We are constrained to believe that this was the fruit of mature consideration, and had its explanation and, in part, its justification in the peculiarity of the *milieu* which surrounded him. Wholly to understand the genesis of this strange phenomenon, we must enter into an analysis of the life of Julian, and the ideas that dominated his inquiring and restless spirit.



Coin of Julian.



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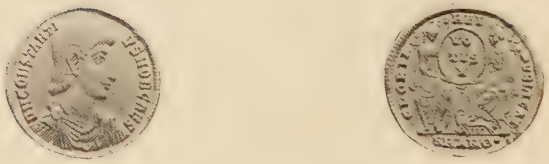

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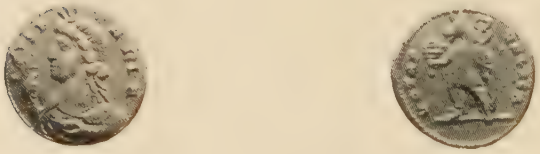

Coin of Helena, Wife of Julian.

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THE LIFE OF JULIAN

Flavius Claudius Julianus was born at Constantinople in 331. He was the son of Julius Constantius, brother of the Emperor Constantine, and of his wife Basilina, who belonged to a noble family of Bithynia. He was related to Eusebius, one of the Princes of the Church, who was first Bishop of Nicomedia, and, later, of Constantinople. The mother died a few months after the birth of her son, who also lost his father when only six years old. The Emperor Constantine, dying in 337, left three sons — Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. These three sons were worthy of a father who, although he embraced Christianity, equalled the most barbarous of his predecessors[1] in his domestic cruelties. His heirs initiated their reign with the extermination of their relatives, of Julius Constantius their uncle, and father of Julian, of the eldest son of the same, of another uncle, and of three cousins, sons of another brother of Constantine.

These crimes were committed in Constantinople, and are to be attributed to Constantius, who

[1] Gorres, *Die Verwandten Morde Constantins des Grossen-Zeit. für Wissens. Theologie*, 1887.

governed the East and resided in that city. Later on, repenting of his terrible misdeeds, he tried to excuse himself by claiming that they were due to a military revolt.[1] This subterfuge, however, is inadmissible, as the army had no interest in destroying these eventual pretenders, while Constantius, suspicious by nature of every one and everything, and misled by courtiers who desired to preserve his confidence and favour, could easily be persuaded to permit crimes which were, in fact, not unusual in the traditions of his family. And even if we consider valid that phrase of Eutropius in which he says that the thing happened, "Constantio sinente potius quam jubente," it is clear that he has only maintained one of those hypocrisies which save appearances, but do not alter facts.

In this massacre they only spared the two youngest sons of Julius Constantius, Gallus and Julian, considered for the moment harmless, because of their tender age. "Constantine"—wrote Libanius—"died of an illness, but the rest of the family fell victims to the sword, the fathers as well as the sons. Julian's half-brother, some years older than himself, escaped being murdered because of an infirmity which was supposed to be mortal, Julian, on account of his age, having just been weaned."[2] This last statement is altogether

[1] *Iuliani Imp. Op. quæ supersunt, recensuit Hertlein*, p. 349, 10 sq.

[2] *Libanii Orationes, recensuit Reiske*, vol. i. p. 524, 19 sq.

inaccurate, as Julian was born in 331, and was therefore six years old when Constantine died.

These three infamous descendants of Constantine soon came to blows among themselves. Constantine was slain in the year 340. Then there remained Constans, who was master of the West, and Constantius, who reigned in the East; finally, in 350, Constans was also murdered by the usurper Magnentius, and so Constantius came into the possession of the whole empire.

During these tragic events the little Julian lived quietly with his mother's family in Constantinople, educated, as Ammianus narrates, under the direction of the Bishop Eusebius, with whom he was distantly connected.[1] The Bishop, however, did not have so much influence over him as the teacher to whom he was confided, when only

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Libri qui supersunt, recensuit Gardthausen*, vol. i. p. 285, 12. If we rightly construe the phrase of Ammianus, it would appear that Julian was educated by Eusebius in Nicomedia. However, as Eusebius, in 338 or 339, passed from the see of Nicomedia to that of Constantinople, it would be necessary to admit that the Bishop educated and instructed Julian during the years of his infancy, and this is by no means very probable. It is, on the contrary, to be supposed that Eusebius, with his Arian tendencies, coming to Constantinople as the confidential adviser of Constantius, would naturally be entrusted with the education of the young Prince. Probably Ammianus, knowing that Eusebius had been, at one time, the instructor of Julian, with the usual inexactitude of the ancient writers, confused the sojourn that Julian made in Nicomedia, years after, with a supposed anterior sojourn which is not substantiated by any other document, and is, in fact, demonstrated impossible by Ammianus himself, when he says that Julian, returning to Nicomedia, as Emperor, found himself once more among the friends whom he had made when he studied under Eusebius. How was it possible for a child not seven years old to form friendships?

seven years old, and to whom were undoubtedly due the best and earliest tendencies of this impressionable and brilliant intellect. This teacher was a eunuch of advanced age, who, as Julian relates in his *Misopogon*,[1] was chosen by his grandfather as the instructor of his mother, Basilina, when she was still quite a child, and it was he who directed her in the reading of Homer and Hesiod. Mardonius, so he was called, must have been a scholar full of admiration for Hellenic culture and traditions. Libanius calls him the "eminent custodian of wisdom."[2] In the midst of frivolous and Christian Constantinople he sought to imbue his pupil with the strictest ideas of virtue, contrasting the pure ideals of Hellenic philosophy and wisdom with the corrupt and enervating habits of the world in which he lived.

But now we will let Julian speak for himself. In his *Misopogon* he gives a vivid description of the educational system to which he was subjected by his pedagogue. In order that the reader should fully comprehend the true significance of this interesting fragment, we must explain, anticipating a future analysis, that the *Misopogon* is a pungent satire directed by the disdainful Emperor against the inhabitants of Antioch, with whom he had fallen into disfavour because of the austerity of his habits. We must, therefore, bear in mind that the

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 454, 15.

[2] *βέλτιστος σωφροσύνης φύλαξ.* Liban., *op. cit.*, i. 525, 13.

discourse of Julian is ironical from the first word to the last. "As for me," said Julian to the Antiochians, ironically deploring the education he had received, "habit does not permit me to cast tender glances in all directions, so as to appear to you beautiful, not in soul, but in face. However, you are right! . . . Easy morals prove the true beauty of the soul! . . . But my pedagogue taught me to keep my eyes cast down on my way to school. I never saw a theatre until my chin was more thickly covered with hair than my head. And, never on my account, but three or four times by order of the Emperor, my relative. Pardon me, therefore! I offer to your odium one who merits it more than I do—my mistrustful pedagogue, who even then made me serious, teaching me that there was only one path to follow. He is the culprit to whom you may attribute the contrast that exists between us, because he elaborated, and, as it were, engraved in my soul, that which then was not exactly to my taste, but which, by force of insistence, he succeeded in making me find agreeable, accustoming me to call churlishness gravity, insensibility wisdom, and strength of character the power of resisting the passions and not becoming enslaved by any of them. Just imagine that even when a child, my pedagogue often admonished me, by Jove and the Muses, saying to me: 'Do not let thyself be carried away by those of thine own age who frequent the theatres and are very fond of public

pageants. Dost thou care for horse-racing? There is the most beautiful description of one in Homer. Take the book and read it. They speak to thee of mimes and dancers? Let them speak! The Phæacian youths danced much better than any of them. And there thou wilt find Phemius the harpist, and Demodocus the singer. And in reading Homer there are certain descriptions of trees that are more pleasing than seeing them in reality. "*I saw at Delos near the temple of Apollo a young shoot of a palm uplifting itself heavenwards.*" And thou wilt read of the wooded Isle of Calypso, of the cave of Circe, and of the garden of Alcinous. Thou well knowest that nothing more beautiful could ever be seen!' . . .

"Perhaps you might like me to tell you the name and origin of my pedagogue. He was a barbarian, by the gods and goddesses, Scythian by origin, and bore the name of him who persuaded Xerxes to make war on Greece. He possessed that qualification which was so much honoured and respected about twenty months ago, but now is considered as a reason for contempt and insult. I mean to say that he was a eunuch, educated by my grandfather, in order that he might explain to my mother the poems of Hesiod and Homer. . . . I was seven years old when I was consigned to his care. From that day he educated me, always following one sole method of instruction. And, not wishing himself to become acquainted with

any other, and not permitting me to do so, he has succeeded in making me odious to all of you. But now, after all, if you are willing, let us offer a libation to his memory, and make friends. He did not know that I should come amongst you, and, even if I did come, that I should possess the great power which the gods have given me, doing violence, I assure you, as much to him who received it, as to him who ceded it. . . . But the will of the gods be done! Perhaps, if the pedagogue had foreseen all this, he would have made certain provisions that would have assured my being more acceptable to you. But now, how could it be possible for me to forget and put aside those rude habits which have become engrained in me? Habit, it is said, is a second nature. To oppose nature is a difficult undertaking, but it is still more difficult to destroy the work of thirty years, above all when it has been accomplished with so much determination. And if that be the case"—(Julian imagines that the Antiochians reply)—"but why didst thou ever conceive the idea to meddle in the affairs of State, and play the judge? . . . Certainly the pedagogue gave thee no instructions on these subjects, because he did not know then that thou wouldst reign. Yes, it was he that taught me"—replies Julian with scathing irony—"that execrable old man, whom you, with good reason, revile as the one truly responsible for my

conduct.[1] But believe me, he also was deceived by others. It is possible that sometimes in the comedies you may have heard such names as Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, and Theophrastus. Well, this silly old man, influenced by them, persuaded me, when I was a youth and loved study, that if I could imitate them in every particular, I should become entirely superior to any other man."[2] From this interesting fragment that teems with most bitter irony, it appears that old Mardonius educated his Imperial pupil in an atmosphere of pure Hellenism. No Christian precept or example was ever brought to the child's notice: he was accustomed to see the origin of all virtue in the teachings of the ancient poets and thinkers of polytheism, and the cause of decadence, corruption, and vice in the prevalence of Christianity, as it was revealed to him in the ecclesiastical and Court circles of Constantinople. This education explains the development of the child's earliest tendencies, and is the key to that phrase of Ammianus, which says as "a rudimentis pueritiæ primis inclinatior erat erga numinum cultum, paulatimque adolescens desiderio rei flagrabat."[3]

This education, which must have left deep

[1] Here it appears evident to us that Julian is no longer speaking of Mardonius, but of some other person known to the Antiochians. But who was this old man? Probably Julian alluded to one of his masters at Nicomedia, and the important postion which he appears to have occupied makes us think it might be Maximus.

[2] Julian., *op. cit.*, 452, 16 sq.

[3] Amm. Marc., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 271, 4 sq.

traces on the impressionable soul of the child, was very soon interrupted. When Bishop Eusebius died in 342, he who had been entrusted with the surveillance of the little Prince — a surveillance which in fact was exercised in such a superficial manner that he had not even perceived that the pedagogue secretly developed in the soul of his pupil an antipathy to Christianity— the Emperor, fearful of finding a rival in the child who grew up, under the eyes of all, in the capital of the empire, sent him, together with his brother Gallus, who had also been saved from the slaughter of the descendants of Constantine, to a species of confinement, in a solitary fortress of Cappadocia, called Macellus, described by the ecclesiastical historian, Sozomenes, as an abode of delight.[1] The two youths lived six years in this retirement, surrounded by a number of slaves, but completely cut off from all the political and intellectual movements of the world. In his discourse to the Athenians, Julian recalls with great bitterness the memory of those days. "What can I say of these six years passed on an estate belonging to another, without any one of the outside world being allowed to communicate with us, or any of our old acquaintances being permitted to visit us? We were debarred from all worthy instruction, from all free conversation, being surrounded by the pomp of the most splendid domestic service,

[1] *Sozomeni Historia, recensuit et illustravit Valesius*, p. 483.

but obliged to exercise with our servants, as if they were our companions, as no one of our own age was allowed to come near us."[1] Julian observes that while his brother Gallus became rude and violent through habits acquired in this sojourn, he was saved by the germs of philosophy—in other words, the Hellenic doctrine, which had been instilled into him. But Julian's words should not be taken literally. If the luxurious prison of the two youths was really closed to every breath of philosophical and polytheistic influence, it appears without doubt that those around them used every effort to instruct them concerning the doctrines of Christianity.

It is most interesting to read what Gregory of Nazianzus has to say about the confinement of the two princes. It would be impossible to find a more direct contradiction to Julian's assertions, or a more absolute travesty of the truth, for polemical purposes. Gregory represents the perfidious Constantius as a model of kindness, and Julian as a monster of ingratitude. Now, when we recall that Constantius, besides his domestic crimes and the numberless cruelties that he committed under the influence of his courtiers and eunuchs, had been the strongest supporter of Arianism, which through him became triumphant, we may measure by the praise that Gregory lavished on him, notwithstanding that he justly merited the most severe re-

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 350, 3 sq.

primand from one who was a Christian, and, above all, an orthodox Christian, the intense rage that Julian's attempt had excited among the rulers of the Church, who, for a moment, were fearful of losing the victory they had acquired at so great a price.

Gregory[1] further narrates that Constantius had no part in the massacre of the family of Constantine, and that he had saved Gallus and Julian with the intention of making them his associates and assistants in the government of the empire. Therefore this most humane Emperor had them educated in one of his villas, amidst all the splendour of regal appointments (thus Gregory describes the involuntary abode of Macellus), and surrounded by wise and religious men. And the two youths were so inflamed with fervour for divine worship, that they assumed the offices of the clergy, read to the assembled people from the sacred books, and exhibited special zeal in the veneration of the martyrs. Gallus, says Gregory, although overbearing in character, was sincere in his piety, while Julian, on the contrary, concealed under an apparent devotion the perfidious tendencies of his soul.[2] And Gregory here relates a miraculous story. The two children, Gallus and Julian, undertook to erect two sanctuaries to the martyrs,

[1] *Gregorii Nazianz. Opera*, Parisiis, 1630, Orat. iii. 58.

[2] Greg. Naz., *op. cit.*, *loco cit.*, 59. κρύπτων ἐν ἐπιεικείας πλάσματι τὸ κακοήθες.

emulating each other in expense and labour. The sanctuary of Gallus was soon finished, but Julian's was always being interrupted by earthquakes, an indication that the martyrs refused the homage of one who would, later on, abjure them. The two brothers also exercised themselves in rhetorical and philosophical discussions, and Julian always chose the part of Hellenism, which he defended with the most lively and unnecessary zeal under the pretence of finding arguments for the weaker side, while he was really preparing himself to combat the truth.[1] In the midst of exaggerations and legends, we find in this, as in most of Gregory's statements, a foundation of truth; there are flashes in his discourses which give to Julian's figure a lifelike reality.

That the higher Christian clergy did not lose sight of these Imperial scions is proved by Julian himself, in a letter written after he became Emperor, where he mentions that Bishop George of Alexandria had sent to him at Macellus certain volumes of his extensive library, in order that he might re-copy them.[2] It is strange, exceedingly strange, that this exclusively Christian education, continued for five years, and which must certainly have afforded Julian a profound knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, only seemed to intensify

[1] Greg. Naz., *loc. cit.*, 61. *προφάσει δῆθεν ὡς τόν ἥττω γυμνάζων λόγον, τὸ δε ὄντως γυμνασίᾳ κατὰ τῆς αληθείας.*

[2] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 488, 16.

in the soul of the youth an antipathy to the religion in which he had been brought up. This is only to be explained by the frightful state of corruption into which the Arian Christians had fallen in the East. Constantius was Arian, and so were the prelates who frequented the Court and occupied the most conspicuous positions. And it is easy to understand that Julian, whose mind was already imbued with the austere teachings of his pedagogue Mardonius, who was inclined to see in Hellenism the source of pure and perfect morality, rose in indignation at the sights he was obliged to witness, and so, although taking part in the Christian worship, he cherished, in the depths of his soul, sentiments of revolt. If instead of a Eusebius, of a George, and of the other Arian ecclesiastics who surrounded him, he had come in contact with an Athanasius, with an Ambrose, with a man, in short, who was able to keep Christianity undefiled by the iniquitous poison of the age, perhaps he would have entirely changed his opinion. That hatred which Julian, even when he arrived at the zenith of his power, continued to feel for Athanasius, the only Christian personage against whom, as we will see, he initiated proceedings of persecution, proves that he appreciated the difference which existed between Arian Christianity and Athanasian Orthodoxy, and saw that the latter constituted the rock against which the ship of Hellenism would be dashed to pieces.

Friedrich Rode in a booklet small of size but replete with thought and erudition,[1] is not of this opinion. He says: "Even were we to omit taking into consideration the circumstance that it was not the true Arianism, but rather the moderate Arianism of Eusebius, that predominated at the Court, and, therefore, necessarily also in the education of Julian, we should particularly note the circumstance that Julian, in his polemics, does not only attack Arianism, but all Christianity, and more especially the Athanasians. And so it is vain to discuss whether Julian would have become a convert to the true teachings of Jesus, since where could he, at that time, have found such teachings? Certainly not from Athanasius. Anticipating the critical theology of the nineteenth century, Julian had perceived the great difference that existed between the Christ of the primitive writings of the New Testament and the God of the Nicene Creed."

All this would be true if Julian had abandoned Christianity because he could not reconcile the rational difficulties offered by metaphysical Christianity with the original doctrines of Jesus. Certainly, in this case, Athanasian Orthodoxy would not have been more potent than Arianism in checking Julian's spirit of investigation; on the contrary, it might have been more difficult for him to swallow. But Julian's return to Hellenism was

[1] Friedrich Rode, *Geschichte der Reaction Kaiser Julian*, p. 32.

not the effect of philosophical reflection, it was rather a question of sentiment, and especially due to the intense disgust with which he was inspired at the sight of the corruption by which Christianity was contaminated—a corruption eloquently recognised by Gregory himself, who did not hesitate to affirm that the Christians had lost through prosperity the glory they had acquired in persecutions and adversity.[1]

Now, it is undeniable that this corruption was much more advanced in Arianism, the religion of the court of Constantius, than in the Orthodoxy that gathered around the noble figure of Athanasius. In Orthodoxy, Christianity had, at least, preserved a part of its moralising efficacy, and if the young Julian had been subjected to this influence from the beginning of his education he might have been attracted to a religion which he would have been obliged, at any rate, to respect.

The young Princes had passed five years in the confinement of Macellus when Constantius, influenced by the difficulties he encountered in administering the government of the whole empire, suddenly changed his attitude towards his two cousins, and called Gallus, the eldest, to the lofty position of Cæsar, which, according to the hierarchy established by Diocletian, was equal to the position of Vice-Emperor, the first figure in the empire

[1] Greg. Naz., *op. cit.*, Orat. iii. p. 62.

after Augustus, the supreme head. Julian was at the same time recalled to Constantinople. Here, according to the statements of Socrates and Sozomenes, in which Libanius concurs, he was placed under the direct care of Ecebolius, the Christian Sophist, a curious personage, who passed without scruple from Christianity to Hellenism according to the moods of the reigning Emperor.[1] Ecebolius followed the commands of Constantius, and, together with the eunuchs of the Court, sought to discipline the inquiring mind of his pupil, greatly to the displeasure of Libanius, who himself earnestly wished to sow the good seed in that generous soul, and had to see it subjected to the influence of a wicked Sophist, who had been bribed to imbue the youth with contempt of the gods.[2]

But the progress that Julian made in his studies, and the sympathy which he excited, aroused the suspicions of Constantius. "Fearing," says Libanius, "that a great city, and one that exercised a great influence, should be won over by the virtues of the youth, and thus a danger to himself might result, he decides to send him to Nicomedia, a city that did not present equal perils, and where he was permitted to devote himself to study." Fear is a bad counsellor. Constantius could not have taken a more imprudent resolution, for Nicomedia was then the chief centre of Hellenism, and there

[1] *Socratis Historia, illustravit Valesius*, p. 151.
[2] Libanii, *op. cit.*, i. 526, 9 sq.

also lived Libanius, the greatest rhetorician of the day, the leader,[1] so to speak, of the Hellenistic party—Libanius, who, as he himself said, preferred the peaceful tranquillity of Nicomedia to the perilous agitation of Constantinople. It is true that Constantius in sending Julian to Nicomedia, following the advice of Ecebolius, had forbidden him to frequent the lectures of Libanius. But the young enthusiast bought them written, and read them with avidity. And the rhetorician, with pardonable vanity, narrates that so great was Julian's intelligence that, notwithstanding the imposed separation of master and disciple, the latter succeeded in imitating his style more perfectly than those who had been in direct contact with him, so that even Julian's later writings bore the imprint of his peculiar mode of expression.[2]

To the influence of Libanius was added another still more powerful, that of the Neo-Platonic philosophers Edesius, Chrysanthius, Eusebius, and Maximus the most important of all, as these men lived either in Nicomedia or in the surrounding towns of Asia. This is, properly speaking, the psychological moment in Julian's career. In the midst of these philosophers, who initiated him into a system in which the preservation of the antique was united to the satisfaction of those exigencies of thought that had promoted the apparition of

[1] In English in the original.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

[2] Libanii, *op. cit.*, i. 527, 10 sq.

Christianity, and that later Christianity itself rendered more powerful, the twenty-year-old Julian decided that his vocation was clear and irresistible, and he became, with profound enthusiasm, a convert to the worship of the gods. Notwithstanding that every effort was made to keep the fact secret, some indications of it transpired. "From the lips of every honest thinker," Libanius exclaims, "arose the prayer that this youth might become the master of the universe, stay the ruin of the world, and help the suffering, as he knew how to cure their ills!"[1]

Libanius and Socrates agree in attributing to the philosopher Maximus, the merit, according to the one, the blame, according to the other, of Julian's conversion. Maximus was considered as a saint of polytheism. Eunapius[2] relates that once, when he entered the temple of Diana in Ephesus, the statue of the goddess smiled with pleasure, and the lamp she held in her hand became kindled. Julian gloried in this atmosphere of mysticism, but was obliged to conceal his enthusiasm, because reports of his actions had reached the ears of Constantius, whose suspicions were immediately awakened, and Julian, not to fall into disgrace, which during the reign of Constantius meant nothing less than being murdered, was obliged outwardly to resume the life and worship of a Christian. But

[1] Libanii, *op. cit.*, i. 529, 2 sq.
[2] *Eunapii Vitas Sophistarum, recensuit Boissonade*, p. 50.

his soul was irremissibly bound up in Hellenism. In this favourable *milieu*, the seed which old Mardonius had sown in him took root and developed, stifling all other intellectual germs that had been implanted in him, as it was matured by hatred of the persecutors of his family, by a reaction against the system of mistrust and repression in which he had been educated, by the sorrow over the ever-vanishing glories of the past, that filled him with aspirations towards a higher morality, which he hoped to realise, not in the Christianity of the courtiers, but in the Neo-Platonism of his masters, at that time a curious mixture of Platonic rationalism and superstitious mysticism. Ten years intervened from the time of his sojourn in Nicomedia in 351, to the day on which he left Gaul, in rebellion against Constantius, and openly invoking the gods of Olympus. But in these ten years, the soul of the Hellenic polytheist, then concealed in Julian, secretly acquired an increased fervour, and never ceased to confirm him in his resolutions.

Julian remained for three years quietly absorbed in study, but, in the year 354, he suddenly found himself again surrounded by dangers and complications. Constantius, falling into his old habits and listening to the insinuations of his courtiers, instigated the assassination, in Pola, of Gallus, Julian's half-brother, whom, three years before, he

had invested with the dignity of Cæsar. In his manifesto to the Athenians, Julian speaks with the greatest indignation of the crime committed by Constantius. He admits that Gallus was a rough and violent man; but he attributes his failings, as we have already seen, to the unfortunate education he had received. Anyhow, this did not excuse the perfidy of Constantius, who "at the instigation of a eunuch, of a chamberlain, and more especially of that of the chief of the cooks, consigned to his most ferocious enemies, in order that they might murder him, the cousin, the Cæsar, the husband of his sister, the father of his little niece, of whom he himself had first married the sister, and to whom he was bound by so many ties of relationship!"[1] Julian's indignation was natural and most explicable. However, to be strictly impartial, we must add that which Julian conceals, or only partially admits, in order to give his own colour to the picture. Gallus was a true descendant of Constantine, a man of cruel and unbridled passions, who during the few years in which he ruled the East shed torrents of blood, encouraged by his wife Constantina, a very demon, worthy to be the daughter of Constantine and the sister of Constantius. Ammianus says that, between the two brothers, Gallus and Julian, there existed the same difference as between the sons of Vespasian, of whom Titus was an admirable example of

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 351, 18 sq.

temperance and wisdom, while Domitian was a monster of cruelty.[1]

Constantius, after having murdered Gallus, fearing the vengeance of Julian, naturally did not wish to leave him at large. In fact, he called him to Milan, and there he remained for seven months in strict confinement. Although he had for a long time ceased all intercourse with his brother, he would not have escaped death, except, as he tells us, "that some god, wishing to save him, procured him the good-will of the beautiful and gentle Eusebia."[2] The intervention of Eusebia, the Emperor's wife, gives a romantic tinge to this part of Julian's life. The enthusiasm with which the persecuted prince speaks of his protectress, and the courage with which she defended him from his numerous enemies among the courtiers of Constantius, lead us to believe that she was not alone actuated by justice and pity—virtues wholly unknown at the Court of Constantius, but that a deeper and personal affection influenced her in her providential interference. Ammianus also[3] narrates that Julian would have certainly perished through the instigations of the villainous courtiers —"nefando adsentatorum cœtu perisset urgenter"— if Eusebia, by divine inspiration, had not intervened. She first obtained permission for Julian to be

[1] Amm. Marc., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 43, 3.
[2] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 351, 27 sq.
[3] Amm. Marc., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 47, 3.

removed from Milan, and sent for a while to Como; she then persuaded Constantius to grant him an audience. This was difficult to accomplish, as Constantius was not inclined for a colloquy with his cousin, and the Chamberlain of the Palace, a eunuch with great influence over the Emperor, and a deadly enemy of Julian, used every means to postpone the meeting, fearing that the two cousins, after seeing each other, might become reconciled.[1] Apparently, in this interview Julian succeeded in exculpating himself, thanks to the intervention of Eusebia, who had paved the way.[2] The fact is that he was set at liberty, and permitted to retire to a small property in Bithynia which he had inherited from his mother, the sole possession that remained to him, because the honest Constantius—*ὁ καλὸς Κωνστάντιος*—after having killed the father, robbed the children of all their paternal inheritance.[3] But Eusebia still continues her beneficent care, and is ever awake to the interest of her *protégé*. Julian was on his way to Bithynia, when, for no appreciable reason, but probably through the calumnies of his enemy, the suspicions of Constantius are again aroused. Eusebia now takes the opportunity of rendering Julian another service, to him the most acceptable of all. She persuades her husband to change the destination of the possible pretender, and instead of sending him to the East, where he

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 353, 10 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 152, 2 sq.
[3] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 352, 10 sq.

might prepare to avenge Gallus, to condemn him to a forced sojourn[1] at Athens. This was exactly in accord with Julian's wishes. The young enthusiast was not interested in Imperial politics, he had no ambition to rule, or any desire for riches or vengeance. He only wished to be allowed to bury himself in his studies; he had but one passion, that of his books; one intense aspiration, to see Greece, his true fatherland, that he loved with such an intense affection[2]—Greece, still the brilliant centre of that Hellenic culture to which he had dedicated his life.

Julian was only allowed to remain a few months in Athens, but his contemporaries affirm that these few months had a great influence on his soul. He still kept his religious convictions concealed, but this did not lessen the fervour with which he devoted himself to his studies, and his efforts to obtain a true knowledge of the Mysteries, which constituted the principal act of worship in this symbolic polytheism that Julian desired to make the religion of the world. Eunapius, Socrates, and Sozomenes seem to consider that his short stay in Athens was one of the most important circumstances of his life. But the most authoritative and interesting narrators are, as usual, Libanius[3] and

[1] "Domicilio coatto" is a sort of enforced residence, as punishment for habitual criminals, or persons of suspicious character, which is used in Italy.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

[2] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 152, 11 sq.

[3] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 532, 1 sq.

Gregory. Libanius said that Julian presented himself to the professors of Athens, and offered himself for examination, and it was then found that he knew more than the masters, so that "he alone of all the youths who had frequented Athens went away, having taught more than he had learnt. Thus he was seen continually surrounded by crowds of youths, old men, philosophers and rhetoricians. The eyes of the gods were also on him, being fully aware that it was he who should restore the worship of his fathers. When he spoke, he was at once admirable and modest, always blushing while speaking. Every one was delighted with his meekness, and the best profited by his teachings. And the youth desired to live and die in Athens, this seeming to him the acme of felicity."

It is impossible to find a more decided antithesis to this sketch designed by Libanius, than that made by Gregory. The latter, as we know, was about Julian's age, and was also in Athens studying at the literary University of that city, to perfect himself in the art of oratory, which he afterwards employed with so much talent in defence of Nicean Orthodoxy. Gregory and Julian were fellow-students; the future theologian lived in daily intercourse with the future apostate, having every opportunity to scrutinise his soul and study it in all its phases, although Julian made every effort to conceal the tendencies and convictions

which had taken root in him. In Gregory's sketch, it is easy to perceive the hostile intention of the author who desires to depict a most repulsive figure, but, notwithstanding this, it seems to us that the sketch cannot be considered a caricature. There is an expression of truth in the figure that stands forth from the pages of the disputant. Julian's singular and agitated life, and its many contradictions, the suddenness of his resolutions, his desperate heroism, the restless versatility of his talent, perhaps better accord with the disturbed, enigmatical, and rather convulsed image presented by Gregory, than with the smiling and serene one traced by Libanius. Says Gregory, writing after Julian's death—"I had suspected him for some time, as far back as when I met him in Athens. He came there shortly after the catastrophe of his brother, having obtained the permission of the Emperor. He had two motives for desiring this sojourn: the first, a praiseworthy one, was to become acquainted with Greece and its schools; the other, which was not expressed, and only noted by a few, to confer secretly with the priests and the impostors, since his impiety did not yet feel strong enough to assert itself. It was just then that I happened to divine his true character, although I am not among those who possess a natural talent in this direction. Still, the anomaly of his demeanour and the singularity of his distractions developed in me this power of divination.

I was not favourably impressed with the jerking motion of his neck, the shifting shoulders, the roaming eyes, that turned from one side to another, having in them something of the maniac; the unsteady, shaking feet, which seemed unable to support his weight, his nostrils dilated with pride and disdain, the lineaments of the face ridiculous and conceited; the immoderate and sudden laugh; the gestures of assent and dissent without reason; words that were suddenly interrupted, as if for want of breath; questions confused and irrelevant, the answers no better, intermingling one with the other without order or reason. But why descend to such minute particulars? I knew him for what he was before he had betrayed himself by his actions. And if there were present any of those who then heard me express my opinion, they would testify without hesitation to the truth of what I say. And they would all remember that I exclaimed at sight of these peculiarities: 'What a monster the Roman Empire is cherishing in its bosom!' But then I was abused and execrated as a false prophet."[1] There is, doubtless, a large amount of exaggeration in this description. It is in too decided a contrast, not only with the sketch given by Libanius, but, what is more important, with the description of the honest and impartial Ammianus. But, I repeat, it possesses some germs of truth, and in it Julian stands forth a

[1] Greg. Naz., *op. cit.*, Orat. iv. p. 121–22.

living figure. But Gregory only wished to consider as the manifestations of a madman the proud and suspicious bearing of a man who was obliged jealously to conceal his sentiments; a man who knew himself surrounded by enemies; a man in whom prudence counselled by reason was ever in conflict with the natural audacity of his soul. But how interesting and dramatic the encounter, in the schools of Athens, of these two youths destined, later on, to become deadly enemies, and who, even in those days, spied on each other with the acuteness of instinctive hatred. If Gregory was singularly discriminating, Julian, whose intuitions had been rendered more keen by the troubles and experiences of his stormy life, must not have been less so. He certainly must have foreseen in Gregory one of the future defenders of Christianity. His uneasy manners, and the incoherence and jerkiness of his conversation, were probably partly assumed to conceal from the scrutinising eyes of his companion his designs, his hopes, and the secret of his being at heart a fervent Hellenist.

While Julian was studying at Athens, an unexpected destiny was maturing for him. A military plot, imagined rather than discovered, at Sirmium, in Pannonia,[1] the revolt of Silvanus in Gaul, stifled by the treacherous murder of the

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 49.

latter,[1] and the repeated devastations perpetrated by the Germans on undefended Gaul, had terrified Constantius. Wavering between trust and distrust, distracted by conflicting advice, finally, impelled by the magnitude of the peril, and, presumably, by the suggestions of Eusebia, the Emperor called his cousin Julian to Milan.[2] With what grief the student abandoned Athens, he himself relates in his manifesto to the Athenians. "What torrents of tears I shed, and how many laments, extending my hands towards your Acropolis, and praying Minerva to save the supplicant and not abandon him, to this many of you who have witnessed it can attest, and, above all, the goddess herself, whom I besought to let me die in Athens, rather than leave it. But the goddess has demonstrated by acts that she would not betray her worshipper, for she has always guided me, and surrounded me with guardians chosen among the angels of the Sun and the Moon."[3]

Arriving at Milan, he stops at one of the suburbs, but is loth to enter the Imperial Court, despite the insistence of the courtiers, who, foreseeing his coming fortune, flock around him, insisting on his being more particular in his dress and manners, thus endeavouring to transform the

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 59.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 64.—Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 352, 24 sq.

[3] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 354, 13 sq. ἠγήσατο γὰρ ἁπανταχοῦ μοι καὶ παρέστησεν ἁπανταχόθεν τοὺς φύλακας ἐξ Ἡλίου καὶ Σελήνης ἀγγέλους λαβοῦσα.

Photo.] THE COLONNADE OF S. LORENZO, MILAN, REMAINS OF THE IMPERIAL BUILDINGS. [*Brogi.*

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student of philosophy into a soldier and courtier.[1] Eusebia, in the meanwhile, made repeated efforts to inspire him with courage and confidence in her. He, on the contrary, tries to persuade her to have him sent away from Milan, and writes a letter, which was almost a supplication, concluding with the words: "I pray that thou mayst have sons, heirs to the Empire; may God grant thee all that thou couldst desire, but send me back home, as soon as it is possible!"[2] Then he reflects on what he is about to do; he fears to compromise himself by sending to the Court a letter for the wife of the Emperor. In the silence of the night, he prays the gods to direct his actions, and the gods announce to him that if he sends that letter he is a dead man. Then Julian convinces himself by a process of reasoning, to him so plausible that he reproduces it in full in his manifesto to the Athenians. "I thought to oppose the gods, pretending to be a better judge of what I ought to do than those who know everything. However, human wisdom applied to the things of the present only succeeds at best in avoiding error, . . . but divine wisdom is infinite and all-seeing, directs us in the right path, and decides for the best. The gods are the authors of all things actual and future. It is therefore natural that they should know the present. And immediately I became aware that I reasoned more correctly than before. And

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 353, 26 sq. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 355, 3.

thinking of our duties, I added: 'Thou art indignant if any one of the creatures which thou possessest deprives thee of its service, or, when called, runs away, even if it be only a horse, a sheep, or an ox. And thou who art a man, and not among the least or the most degraded, wouldst deprive the gods of thyself, and thou refusest thyself for the purpose for which they would use thee? Beware of acting foolishly and offending divine Justice. Instead of cringing and flattering, out of fear of death, put thyself in the hands of the gods; do that which they will, and commit thyself to their care, even as Socrates did. Take things as they come; refer everything to them, neither acquire nor grasp at anything for thyself, but receive, without hesitation, that which they give thee.' I became convinced that this reasoning with which the gods have impressed me is the most sure and advisable for a well-balanced man, since to run to certain danger, for fear of future treachery, really seems to me most imprudent. I yielded therefore, and obeyed, and so, in a short time, they bestowed upon me the name and the chlamys of Cæsar!"[1]

What could possibly have happened to put Julian in such an extraordinary and painful state of mind? Ammianus Marcellinus thus explains it.[2] Julian, as we have said, had been called to Milan because the conspiracy of Sirmium and the rebellion of

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 355, 14 sq.
[2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 64.

Silvanus had aroused the suspicions of Constantius. When Julian arrived at Milan, every danger of the conspiracy had vanished, and Silvanus was overthrown and killed. But the anxiety of the Emperor was again aroused, and this time for far graver reasons. The ominous signs of the terrible barbaric invasion that, about a century later, overran the empire became more and more threatening in their aspect. The Germans, passing the Rhine and devastating the Eastern provinces of Gaul, appeared as an impending peril, as a force which the empire was no longer able to resist. Constantius was not the man to take matters into his own hands, and, personally, lead his army to battle. But, at the same time, he felt that the circumstances necessitated decisive action.

Eusebia, the zealous protectress of Julian, takes advantage of the occasion, and counsels her husband to call his young cousin to participate in the government of the empire, making him Cæsar, and investing him with discretionary powers as to the administration and the war in Gaul. The courtiers try to oppose the rising fortune of the young Prince, warning Constantius of the dangers that might accrue from having a colleague in the empire, and recalling to him his recent experience with the "Cæsarate" of Gallus. But Eusebia insists, overcomes all resistance, and Julian is named Cæsar by the Emperor. Judging from Julian's own words, it would appear that he

was most reluctant to accept the high office, because he could not overcome his great mistrust of the Emperor. But, as we have seen, his faith in the wisdom of Providence, or rather in himself, decided him not to resist his destiny, and to allow himself to be clad in the chlamys of the Cæsar.

This act, which makes such a radical change in the fortunes of Julian, who, from being a persecuted prince, became a colleague with the Emperor under such extremely difficult conditions, must inspire some suspicions concerning the intentions of Constantius. Libanius unhesitatingly declares them evil. "And so that no one need wonder"—he writes—"if I name as enemy of Julian him who associated him with himself in the empire, I will explain the reasons of such a union. It certainly was not that he saw with pleasure another beside him on the Imperial throne and with the purple robes, because, even in his dreams, that sight would have been insupportable to him. Then why did he call another to participate in his power? On all sides he was threatened by the barbarians, but especially in the West. A general was not sufficient to restore order, and he felt that the prestige of an Emperor was necessary to stem the current. Now, the Emperor, not wishing to go himself, and, on the other hand, it being necessary for him to take a colleague, he chose, putting aside all others, the one whom he had so greatly injured, certainly not forgetful of the blood he had shed, but because he

had more faith in the one who had the right to accuse him than in those whose duty it was to be grateful to him. Nor was he mistaken. . . . But he soon felt an unreasonable regret for what he had done, and, in consequence of this, he placed at his side, in the position of counsellors, men who, instead of encouraging him, would prevent him from accomplishing any noble action."[1] Ammianus, who was probably an eye-witness, describes the solemn ceremony that took place in Milan when Julian was invested with the office of Cæsar. The Emperor Constantius, in the presence of the army, made an address that was both flattering and encouraging to Julian. The soldiers welcomed with wild enthusiasm the new Cæsar, and, as a proof of their joy, beat their shields on their knees. Resplendent in the Imperial purple, he returned to the palace, seated in the same coach with the Emperor. But on the way he repeated to himself the verse of Homer:

τὸν δὲ κατ' ὄσσε
ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή.[2]

In order to confirm the proofs of his favour, Constantius gave his sister Helena in marriage. After a month of *fêtes* and rejoicings, on the first days of December 355, Julian left for Gaul, and Constantius accompanied him, beyond the Ticino, half way between Lomello and Pavia.[3] That is

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 378–79.
[2] *Iliad*, v. 82, 83.
[3] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 67.

the story which Ammianus tells, and Julian himself does not disagree with it in the eulogy that he wrote on the Empress Eusebia as a proof of his gratitude and in the two speeches addressed to the Emperor Constantius, in which he conceals, under a mantle of devotion, his true sentiments. He also relates the solemn pomp and splendour of the pageant and the gifts he received, especially from Eusebia. And his insisting so much on the kind thoughtfulness of the Empress seems sufficient proof that between Julian and herself there existed a confidential relationship much more intimate than would appear from the official discourses. "I wish"—he wrote—"to mention one of her gifts, which afforded me the most singular pleasure. As soon as she found out that I had carried with me very few books, in the hope and desire of returning home as quickly as possible, she gave me a sufficient number on philosophy, history, rhetoric, and poetry, largely to satisfy my insatiate desire for intercourse with them, and thus transformed Gaul into a museum of Greek books. Never separating myself from these gifts, it was of course impossible that I should ever forget the donor. And when I set out on a campaign, I take with me one of these books as viaticum for the march."[1] Julian glories in expressing admiration for his protectress. "When I arrived in her presence, I thought I saw, as in a temple, the statue of Wisdom. My soul overflowed

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 159, 5 sq.

with reverence, and, for some time, I remained immovable, my eyes riveted on the ground, until she exhorted me to take courage. 'The present gifts,' she said, 'thou hast from us. The rest thou shalt have from God, if thou be faithful and just with us.' And she said no more, although she was as capable of making a discourse as the most renowned orator. When she dismissed me from the audience, I remained overpowered with admiration and emotion; it seemed, too, that I had heard the voice of Wisdom itself, so soft and mellifluous to my ears was the music of her tones." [1]

But though the intentions of Eusebia toward the young Prince were benevolent and cordial, we cannot attribute the same sincerity to the demonstrations of confidence with which the Emperor surrounded him. In his manifesto to the Athenians, Julian affirms that, on becoming Cæsar, his captivity was even more irksome, because of the relentless and continued espionage with which the suspicious Constantius surrounded him. "What slavery"—he exclaims—"was mine; how many and how dark, by Hercules, were the menaces that threatened my life! The doors were watched, the door-keepers were watched, the hands of my familiars examined, fearing lest some one might bring me a note from my friends, and I had strangers as servants. I was only allowed to bring with me four

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 158, 8 sq.

familiars, for my personal service, of whom two were quite young, and two adults. One of these, who knew of my devotion to the gods, practised with me in secret the rites of the cult, and to him I confided the care of my books; the other was a physician, who, alone among my friends and faithful companions, had been able to follow me, because it was not known that he was my friend.[1] So great was my fear that, although it caused me much pain, I believed it my duty to prohibit many of my friends from visiting me, fearing to become a cause of misfortune to them and myself. For the rest, Constantius sent me with only three hundred and sixty soldiers into the country of the Celts, in mid-winter, not so much to command the armies which I found there, as to obey their generals. To that end he had written to them to watch me more than they did the enemy, for fear I should attempt something new."[2]

The defenders that Constantius has found among modern historians[3] question the truth of Julian's assertions. Now, I will admit that there might be some exaggeration, and that some parts of the picture are too darkly coloured. Thus it does not seem just to find a cause of complaint in the small military escort that accompanied Julian. For he was supposed not to conduct a new army into Gaul,

[1] Eunapius (*op. cit.*, p. 54) gives us the names of these two. The faithful servant was Evemerus, and the physician, Oribasius.

[2] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 367, 2 sq.

[3] Kock, *Kaiser Julian.*—Allard, *Julien l'Apostat.*

but to take command of the army which was already there. Admitting this, and that Julian's journey was made through a friendly and quiet country, three hundred and sixty men were all that were necessary. But when Julian complains of being surrounded by enemies and spies, he must have told the truth, and the events which happened after his arrival in Gaul, and the latent but active hostility existing among his generals, clearly proved that the intentions of Constantius were insincere. The Emperor certainly feared the Germans, but he feared still more his Imperial cousin. He desired to save Gaul, but not if Julian was to come out of the enterprise with too much honour. In fact, had Julian been so entirely defeated as to deliver him from a possible and dreaded rival, the defeat would appear to him a misfortune not without compensation. And he had good reasons to suppose that the undertaking would finish in this way. Who could possibly imagine that this Prince, only twenty-five years old, would be capable of commanding an army—he who had passed his whole life amongst priests and philosophers; who had never occupied himself with military affairs; whose lack of military training had called forth the scorn and ridicule of the Court of Constantius? And, besides, the expedition was taking place under the most depressing auspices. At Turin Julian received the tidings that Cologne had been captured and destroyed by the Germans, and he, appreciating the gravity of the peril, ex-

claimed that there was nothing left for him but to encounter a glorious death.

The populations of Gaul received him with the most lively enthusiasm. He entered Vienne, near Lyons, which was then the seat of government in Gaul, amidst a crowd joyful and reassured by the presence of a Prince of the Imperial family. And here a curious incident occurred, which is related to us by Ammianus. In the midst of the acclamations of the crowd, a blind old woman asked who it was that they were saluting. "The Cæsar Julian," was the answer.—"Behold him"—she exclaimed —"who will restore the temple of the gods!"[1]— Was it a rumour already in circulation, a presentiment, or the expression of a desire nurtured by a part of the population? The truth is that Julian was believed to be the hero who would disturb the world of ideas and the world of facts.

The five years in which Julian administered the government of Gaul form a glorious episode in the midst of the decadence of the empire, and, for a moment, this decadence—which, later, like a whirlwind, was to sweep away everything in its course—seemed for a moment to be arrested. Julian in this period appears in an aspect absolutely marvellous. The wisdom and valour which he displayed in directing the long and arduous campaign against the Germans, forcing them back across the Rhine,

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 67, 29.

put him on an equality with the most famous generals of ancient times. He here reveals all the genius of a man who was born with a natural aptitude for command, and with a talent for great military combinations. Ah! if Julian had not been exalted and misled by the folly of Neo-Platonism, and if his views concerning the reality of things had been more precise and better balanced, what an admirable Emperor he would have been! But he was only a brilliant meteor, passing and evanescent, when he might have been one of the most powerful factors of human history, a truly great ruler of nations! . . . However, from a psychological and dramatic point of view, it is just this strange union of characteristics which constitutes the principal interest in the history of Julian. He was at the same time an exalted idealist, full of mystical superstitions and fixed ideas; a commander of genius; a heroic soldier; and an expert administrator. There was something of Marcus Aurelius in him, but a Marcus Aurelius immoderate, unbalanced and unreasonable. Julian is more brilliant, but Marcus Aurelius possesses greater depth of sentiment. The imagination that in Marcus Aurelius was cold and restrained, in Julian was so ardent and excitable that it played him a scurvy trick, making him believe in the existence of ideas and things that were long since dead. Again Julian, just the reverse of Marcus Aurelius, cared more for the appearance than for

the substance of things, and, carried away by the phantoms of his brain, carelessly dissipated his wonderful good fortune and the marvellous gifts that Nature had bestowed upon him.

And now we will give a rapid glance at what Julian accomplished in Gaul before discussing his attempted restoration of paganism, which is naturally the most interesting period of his life. We cannot form a just conception and living image of the man unless we stop for a moment to consider him in the light of the warrior and leader, who, issuing from the Neo-Platonic sanctuaries of Nicomedia, Ephesus, and the school of Athens, takes into his hands the direction of a desperate war, and conducts his battalions from victory to victory. Even the calm and moderate Ammianus Marcellinus, who renders the impressions of his contemporaries, and was an eye-witness of Julian's actions, abandons himself to hyperbole and rhetoric when he speaks of the young prince; and he sees in him a miracle preordained by divine law. "In an instant"—he says —"he shone so brightly as to be adjudged for prudence a new Titus, his successes in war equal to those of Trajan, humane as Antoninus, and in abstract mental investigations to be a peer of Marcus Aurelius, whom he wished to emulate in his actions and habits." And Ammianus has many reasons to be astonished when he recalls that this youth, "transported suddenly into the midst of the dust of Mars, not from a military tent, but from

the tranquil shades of the Academies, subdued Germany, and, having pacified the regions of the frozen Rhine, killed and bound in chains the barbarian kings thirsting for bloodshed."[1]

Julian passed the winter of 356 in ascertaining the bearings of his new surroundings, and in acquiring the necessary knowledge of administration and the art of war. He did not disdain to perfect himself in the most common exercises, and, as an encouragement and a consolation during these, he repeated, from time to time, the name of Plato. He gave a novel and admirable example of temperance and diligence. He was a systematic organiser of his time, and this explains the immense amount of work he was able to accomplish. He rose in the middle of the night from the rude couch on which he slept, and divided into two parts the hours that must pass before the dawn of day. First he secretly offered a prayer to Mercury, who stimulates thought; then he attended to the affairs of state, the government of the provinces, and the arrangements for attack and defence. These occupations over, Julian became absorbed in his favourite study of philosophy, which no circumstances could induce him to neglect, as it constituted the principal interest in his life. And, besides philosophy, he studied poetry, history, and exercised himself in the Latin language. Julian

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 77, 14 sq.

had been nurtured on poetry. Bacchylides was his favourite poet, not counting the great authors of antiquity. Unfortunately, the Hellenic school at that time was too much imbued with formal and pedantic rhetoric, which was the characteristic note of the literature of the period.[1]

In the summer of 356 Julian opens his first campaign. Hearing that Augustodunum (Autun) was threatened by the invaders, he rushes to its rescue, delivers it, and thence, by a wonderfully rapid march, reaches the valley of the Rhine, traverses it from Strasburg to Cologne, which he enters in triumph, and here the kings of the Franks, terrified by his sudden and successful attack, are forced to conclude a peace.[2] In this first campaign, it would appear that Julian acted in concert with another army corps, led by the Emperor in person, which must have descended from Rhætia and the Upper Rhine, towards Alsatia. We infer this from an incidental statement made by Ammianus.[3] It is strange that neither Ammianus nor Julian mention this movement of the Emperor in the account of the exploits that were achieved during the summer of 356. At any rate, if the Emperor did take part in this campaign, it failed to produce any important results, and Julian, at the beginning of the following year, found that

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 82, 5 sq., and vol. ii. p. 40, 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 80, 8 sq.

[3] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 100, 25 sq.

he was obliged to face alone the formidable undertaking of liberating Gaul from the Germanic invasion.

Julian's winter quarters were at Agenticum (Sens), and there, according to Ammianus, overburdened by the cares and difficulties of the war, which seemed ever on the increase, his whole time was divided between efforts to withstand the attacks and to provide food for his soldiers. Here he was subjected to another great danger, for as the barbarians were well acquainted with the weakness of his forces, they blockaded him narrowly. He might have been assisted by Marcellus, who commanded the cavalry stationed not far from him, but Marcellus was one of those generals who had received orders from Constantius not to aid Julian, but rather to keep him under surveillance. In obedience to the commands he had received, he left Julian alone to encounter the difficulties of the situation. But Julian's fiery resistance discouraged the besiegers, and, after a month, they retired, ashamed of, and disheartened at, their complete failure. Julian deprived the unworthy Marcellus of his command, and the latter knowing that Constantius always lent a willing ear to the accusations of informers, rushed to Milan, to make complaints against Julian. But Julian, foreseeing this, sent to Milan his faithful Evemerus, who so ably pleaded his cause before the Emperor that, on this occasion at least, he turned a deaf ear to

the calumnies of courtiers and spies. And, on the contrary, the supreme command of the army was entrusted to Julian, freed from all restrictions, and the interference of other generals.[1] The campaign of 357 was, however, menaced with failure because of the disloyalty of another lieutenant, Barbatius, who allowed himself to be defeated by the Germans, and who also rushed to Milan to accuse Julian.[2] But his machinations were powerless before the brilliant victory that Julian gained near Strasburg, over a coalition of the principal rulers of the Germanic tribes, headed by King Conodomarius, the most powerful among them all.

Ammianus and Libanius agree concerning the conduct of Barbatius, which they attribute to his weakness of character and his hatred of Julian. But, as they draw their information from different sources, the rhetorician and the historian often differ in their narrations of facts, and on this occasion we must, undoubtedly, acknowledge that the authorities quoted by Libanius seem more reliable than those of Ammianus. Ammianus[3] relates that Barbatius, rather than lend to Julian some of the boats he had built to construct the bridges on the Rhine, burnt them all. Libanius, on the contrary, says that Barbatius, wishing to act independently of Julian, constructed a bridge

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 359, 1.
[2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 94, 7 sq.
[3] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 96, 13 sq.

of boats, intending to invade the German territory. But the barbarians, anticipating by fifteen centuries the device of the Austrians at the battle of Essling, threw into the current a quantity of timber, which, carried along by the impetuous river, dashed against the boats, shattering and destroying them. Barbatius, who was no Napoleon, overcome by fear, fled with his 30,000 men, hotly pursued by the barbarians.[1]

The retreat of Barbatius re-animated the hopes of the Germans, and made them feel assured of a complete victory over Julian's army. They learned from a deserter that the Cæsar could only oppose 13,000 men to the combined forces of the seven barbarian kings.[2] Conodomarius, who led the Germanic army, therefore determined to execute a master stroke, and establish himself on the left bank of the Rhine, taking possession, by the destruction of the small Roman army, of the whole of Eastern Gaul. But the hopes of Conodomarius, though justified by the difficult position in which the defection of Barbatius had left Julian, were admirably frustrated by the heroic valour of the Cæsar. It is necessary to read in Ammianus the long description of this battle to appreciate thoroughly the military genius, the presence of mind, and the heroism of the youthful commander. The Roman army was only half as

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 539, 5 sq.
[2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 98, 11.

large as the army of the barbarians. Conodomarius, "the infamous instigator of the war" — as Ammianus calls him — "bearing on his head a glittering helmet, led the left wing, audacious and confident in his great strength of limb, magnificent on his foaming charger, conspicuous by the brilliancy of his armour, and brandishing a javelin of immense size."[1] The barbarians felt certain of victory. It was a proof of singular audacity on the part of the Romans to attempt the battle. But Julian, this philosopher, this theologian, this mystical and visionary dreamer, was, by a miracle of which we do not think there is another example, a man of action and of singular ability. On the field of battle, together with a marvellous quickness of perception, he possessed the faculty of inspiring his soldiers with confidence, and of awakening in them an ardour for the fray and a thirst for danger. These gifts, which were especially conspicuous during the campaigns of Gaul, appear, with equal brilliancy, in the war against the Persians, and are among the special features of Julian's character. Thus it happened that the battle of Strasburg, conducted with wonderful ability, resulted in a magnificent victory. The barbarian army was partly destroyed, and partly thrown into the Rhine. The terrible King Conodomarius, who attempted to escape and hide himself, was made a prisoner, and sent by Julian to Constantius, who caused him to

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 102, 23 sq.

be imprisoned in a dungeon on the Cœlian Hill, where he died.[1]

This memorable victory caused Constantius more anger than pleasure. At the court of Milan Julian was called in derision *Victorinus*.[2] The courtiers pretended to attribute all the merit to the wise foresight of the Emperor, and he, lending a willing ear to this stupid adulation, left in the Imperial records an account of the battle of Strasburg, in which he figured as the glorious tactician who had won the day, excluding entirely the name and achievements of Julian, "which"—says Ammianus—"he would have entirely concealed, if it had been possible for fame to be silent concerning glorious actions, notwithstanding there may be those who desire to obscure them—*ni fama res maximas vel obumbrantibus plurimis silere nesciret.*"[3]

Julian, to reap the fruits of his victory, crosses the Rhine and penetrates into the heart of Germany, driving before him the barbarians terrified by the greatness of his audacity. And,

[1] Ammianus, who did not take part in the campaign of Gaul, gives such a detailed account of the battle of Strasburg as to leave no doubt that he received his information from an eye-witness. From the fragments of Eunapius, and also from a passage of Zosimus (i. 2, 8), we may infer that there existed an account written by Julian himself, and, perhaps, not only of this battle, but also of a great part of his campaign against the barbarians. Besides this, the physician Oribasius, who was always at Julian's side, has left records of what he had seen—*ὑπομνήματα*—of which Zosimus made use.

[2] "Victorinus—Little Victor."—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

[3] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 110, 25 sq.

finally, having rebuilt and armed a castle which had been erected by Trajan, and later abandoned, and having arranged a truce of ten months with the same kings against whom he had fought at Strasburg, he returns to Gaul and takes up his winter quarters at Paris. Ammianus says that during the whole of this campaign Julian's valour was so marvellous that we might almost believe those who pretended that he sought death, because he preferred to fall fighting rather than to be condemned as his brother Gallus had been. But this explanation, Ammianus adds, is unworthy of consideration, as Julian, when he became Emperor, proved his heroism by acts no less marvellous.[1]

How did Julian occupy himself, in his winter quarters at Paris, in the short period of repose that the war permitted him? In examining the financial accounts of Gaul, in discussions with Florentius, the Prefect of the Pretorium, or, as we might say, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to prove to him that Gaul could not bear an increase of taxation, and that, besides, it was unnecessary, as the Budget was sufficient for all reasonable expenses. The Chancellor carried his complaints to the Emperor, who advised Julian to have faith in Florentius. But Julian is immovable; he refuses even to read the papers containing the proposals of Florentius, and, in a moment of indignation, throws them on the ground. Thus, by his firmness, Gaul is saved

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 115, 5 sq.

Photo.] THE THERMES, PARIS, THE REMAINS OF JULIAN'S PALACE. [*Ferdinand Roux.*

The statue in the centre is stated to represent Julian, but its authenticity is doubtful.

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from ruin.[1] The people of Gaul were right when they compared his administration to a resplendent and serene sunlight after a gloomy night.

The dissensions between Julian and Florentius, which were the chief causes of the renewal of Constantius' distrust and suspicion, had their origin in a matter much more personal than that of public administration. Florentius, following the custom of the time and of the Imperial Government, was a thief. The incorruptible Julian could not tolerate this abuse, hence arose the desire of Florentius and his associates to rid themselves of this inconvenient Prince. An episode related by Libanius illustrates the situation. "It happened"—Libanius maliciously relates—"that a citizen accused a magistrate of robbery. Florentius, as Prefect, acted as judge, and, accustomed as he was himself to robbing, and furthermore having been bribed, he expressed his indignation against the accuser, feeling himself compromised by his companion in trade. But as the injustice was most evident, and as it was spoken of in public, it made the ears of its author tingle. Julian, at first, refused, saying that it was not within his sphere. But Florentius insisted, not that he desired a just sentence, but because he believed that Julian would decide in accord with him, even if the sentence were unjust. But when he saw that Julian cared more for the truth than for him, it made

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 116, 12 sq.

him very angry, and he calumniated in his letters the person in whom Julian had the greatest confidence,[1] and had him expelled from the palace, as if he had misled the young Prince, to whom, instead, he had really acted the part of a father."[2]

We must never lose sight of the fact that Julian was considered as one of the most enlightened, conscientious, and just men of antiquity, and this circumstance should be borne in mind when we attempt to decide on the real gist of those actions for which he was handed down to posterity branded with infamy, namely, his attempt to restore paganism.

The two subsequent campaigns of 358 and 359 were a series of successes for Julian, by which the daring and fortunate General, not satisfied with liberating Gaul, penetrated into the heart of Germany, subduing one by one the most warlike tribes. The disloyalty of the enemy, who only kept their agreements through fear of punishment, and the difficulty of providing food, the lack of which once caused Julian's faithful soldiers to revolt against him, created obstacles, at every step, sufficient to discourage and depress the most able commander. But Julian never lost his presence of mind,[3] the quickness of his perception, or his timely daring, and thus he succeeded in carrying order, peace, and

[1] This was Sallustius.
[2] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 549, 18 sq.
[3] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 129, 21 sq.

prosperity into regions which had been, for years, disturbed and disheartened by the perpetual menace of a disastrous invasion. It is most interesting to note the legitimate pride and simple dignity which Julian displays in speaking of his military successes. "In the two years following (the battle of Strasburg)"—he writes to the Athenians—"the barbarians were all expelled from Gaul, many cities were rebuilt, and a great number of ships came from Brittany. I gathered together a fleet of six hundred ships, four hundred of which I had constructed in less than ten months, and with these I sailed up the Rhine, which was not an easy undertaking, because of the barbarians who inhabited the banks of the river. Even Florentius believed the enterprise so impossible that he promised these barbarians a tribute of two thousand pounds of silver, if they allowed us to have a free passage. Constantius, on hearing of the offer, wrote me to have it carried out, unless I considered it too ignominious. And how could it have been otherwise, if it appeared so even to Constantius, who was in the habit of bargaining with the barbarians? But I gave them nothing, and marching against them, with the defence and assistance of the gods, occupied the country of the Salians, expelled the Camavians, and captured many oxen, women and children.[1] So greatly were they terrified by the

[1] Zosimus's account of this campaign against the barbarians of the Rhine is most interesting (3, 7). From it we learn that Julian

preparations for my invasions that they sent me hostages, and assured me of the free passage of my provisions. It would be too long to enumerate and describe, one by one, everything that I accomplished in these four years. I recapitulate them. Three times I crossed the Rhine; I recovered from the barbarians twenty thousand prisoners, who were found beyond the Rhine; in two battles and one siege I captured thousands of men in the flower of their age; I sent to Constantius four battalions of the strongest infantry, three not quite so strong, two cohorts of the most daring cavalry: now, by the favour of the gods, I am master of all the cities, having retaken a few less than forty."[1]

We have now arrived at the most fateful moment in Julian's life. The events that will conduct him to the zenith of power are rapidly maturing. While the Cæsar in Gaul and Germany passed from victory to victory, in the East, Constantius was struggling amidst the most grave and inglorious difficulties arising out of the war with the Persians, that had been going on for many years, and now threatened to become a disaster for the Empire. Constantius' petty and depraved soul was over-

took advantage of the proffered assistance of a noted brigand, called Cariectus. This curious episode is, however, not mentioned either by Julian or Ammianus. Perhaps they did not wish to diminish the magnificent heroism of the Cæsar's achievements. This Cariectus was afterwards regularly enrolled in the Roman army (*vide* Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 94, 9).

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 360, 10 sq.

flowing with jealousy of his cousin. Fearing that this continuation of successes might develop, in Julian, aspirations towards the Imperial crown, instigated, according to Ammianus,[1] by Florentius, Constantius decided to clip the Cæsar's wings. With this intention he sends the Tribune Decentius to Paris, bearing orders to Julian to transfer to the East the pick of his troops, the legions of the Heruli, of the Batavii, the Petulantes, and of the Celts. He recommended him to make no delays, as he needed these troops to arrive in time to take part in the spring campaign against the allied forces of the Parthians and Persians. The troops were to be conducted to Constantius by the General Lupicinus. Julian foresees that the Emperor's orders cannot be executed without difficulties and disputes. These barbaric soldiers had voluntarily taken service with the understanding that they were not to leave their own country. It was certain that they would refuse to be led into the Far East to die away from their families. Lupicinus meanwhile was absent; he had been sent to England some time previous by Julian, and Florentius, foreseeing the storm, retired to Vienne, and made no haste to obey Julian's call, who, therefore, found himself without counsellors and obliged to assume the whole responsibility. Besides this, Decentius, frightened at the dangers that might arise from the delay, was pressing him to act at once. At the

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 201, 15 sq.

same time, an anonymous libel was circulated among the legions, a part of which was to this effect: "We, like condemned criminals, are driven to the extreme confines of the earth, and our families, which, after many bloody battles, we have liberated from servitude, will become for ever slaves of the Germans."[1] Reading this libel, Julian decides to remove what seems to be the greatest objection on the part of the soldiers, and arranges that their families shall follow them, and that they be furnished with means of transport. Decentius, however, insists that the soldiers must be brought from their different stations, and concentrated in Paris, whence they are to take their departure. This is done, and the troops being assembled in the suburbs of Paris, Julian visits them, exhorts them, and speaks one by one to those among the soldiers who are personally known to him, encouraging them with promises of the liberality of the Emperor, and the prizes that await them. He, furthermore, entertains all the leaders at a solemn banquet, from which they retire sad and perturbed because a merciless fortune deprived them at the same time of their just commander and of their native land.[2]

Tranquillity at last seemed to be restored, and all fear of resistance vanished, when suddenly, in the middle of the night, the legions arm themselves,

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 203, 15 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 204, 4 sq.

and rushing to the palace, surround it so entirely that no one can escape. With loud cries they proclaim Julian "Augustus," that is to say Emperor, and at the dawn of day they force him to present himself, and at the sight of him the joyful clamour is redoubled. In vain Julian attempts to calm them, promising that they shall not be obliged to pass the Alps, and assuring them of the pardon of Constantius. The soldiers become more and more excited; they lift him up on their shields, and demand that he should place on his head the Imperial diadem. But he does not possess one. It is proposed then to crown him with a necklace belonging to his wife, but a female ornament is not suitable as an emblem of Empire. Then some one else proposes the gilded breastplate of a charger. Worse still. At last, a standard bearer of the Petulantes tearing off the *torques* he wears as a sign of his grade, with this encircles Julian's forehead. The Cæsar, not being able to resist the importunities of the soldiers, retires into the palace, dazed, reluctant, and perturbed. Now it happens that, on the following day, it is reported among the soldiers that during the night Julian has been secretly murdered. They again arm themselves, and in great frenzy rush to the palace, and are not satisfied until the new Emperor appears before them, resplendent in all the insignia of power. From this moment Julian openly assumes his position, addresses the soldiers as their Emperor, recalls to them the deeds

which they have together accomplished, declares his absolute confidence in their fidelity, and promises them recompense and promotion. He still hopes to be able to enter into some agreement with Constantius, and avoid thus a civil war, but at all hazards he is resolved not to draw back from his decision, having an absolute faith in himself and in his destiny. Thus to his intimates he relates that, the night preceding his proclamation, the Genius of the Empire appeared to him and said: "More than once, O Julian, I have occupied the vestibule of thy palace, with the intention of increasing thy dignity, but I have always retired, almost repulsed. If this time again thou refusest to receive me, despite the unanimous wishes of so many, I will depart mortified and sad. But bear it well in mind, I will come to thee no more!"[1]

Of this interesting event we have the account written by Julian himself. In the manifesto sent to the Senate and to the people of Athens, when he decided to throw away all scruples, and to move against Constantius, the new Emperor narrates how his proclamation happened. This most vivid account is, in the main, completely in accord with that left by Ammianus. Julian tells how he was surrounded by spies and calumniators, chief among whom were Pentadius, Paul, Gaudentius, and Lucilianus. To these he also adds Florentius, on account of the financial discord, of which we have

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 208, 10 sq.

spoken, as related both by Ammianus and Libanius. These spies first persuade Constantius to separate Julian from his most faithful friend Sallustius, who possessed his entire confidence, and it is also at their instigation that the Emperor deprives him of his army. "Constantius, perhaps urged on by jealousy of my achievements, writes a letter replete with personal insults, and menaces to the Celts. And he commands that, without distinction, nearly all the best troops should be sent away from Gaul, confiding the execution of this order to Lupicinus and Gentonius, and warning me not to oppose myself to them. But how can I tell you here all that the gods did for me? I decided, in my soul, and the gods themselves are my witnesses, to cast aside all the glory and cares of empire, and to live in retirement, far from all affairs. I, therefore, awaited the arrival of Florentius and Lupicinus, the first of whom was in Vienne, and the other in Brittany. Suddenly there began a great agitation among the citizens and the soldiers, and, in a neighbouring city, an anonymous libel was circulated among the legions of the Petulantes and the Celts, in which the Emperor was most disrespectfully mentioned. The writer complained of their being forced to abandon Gaul, and deplored, at the same time, the insults which had been offered me. This libel produced a very deep impression, and the partisans of Constantius came to me, insisting with all their might that I should send the troops away before

other such libels could be circulated among the remaining legions. I had not around me a single individual who was well disposed towards me, only Nebridius, Pentadius, and Decentius, who had come to communicate to me the orders of Constantius. I replied that it was best to await Lupicinus and Florentius, but this they did not approve, and affirmed that it was necessary to act immediately, unless I wished to awaken the old suspicions, adding, as a new proof, this further example. And they continued: 'If thou sendest the soldiers immediately, the merit will be thine. But if, on the contrary, thou awaitest the return of the other two, Constantius will not attribute the merit to thee, but to them, and thou wilt be accused.' . . . I had before me the choice of two roads. I wished to follow the one, and they tried to force me to take the other, for fear that, if anything happened, it might give the soldiers an excuse to revolt, and be a cause of complete disorder. And truly this fear was not entirely unfounded. In fact, the legions came, and I, according to the arrangements made, went to meet them, and announced to them their imminent departure. A day passed, during which I knew nothing of their decisions. Jove, the Sun, Mars, Minerva, and all the gods know it that, until the evening, I had not the shadow of a suspicion. It was only late, after sunset, that I received any news, and, behold, in an instant, as it seems, the palace

is surrounded, and all begin to shout and make a great noise, while I, with little faith in my own wisdom, try to decide what is best for me to do. I was at that moment alone in a room adjoining that of my wife, who was then living. From there, looking up at the heavens through an opening in the wall, I prostrated myself before Jove. The noise became louder and louder, and, even in the hall of the palace, all were shouting, so that I prayed the god to give me a sign, and he gave one, and revealed to me that I should yield, and not oppose myself to the will of the army. Notwithstanding this sign, I did not immediately surrender, but resisted as long as it was possible, and did not accept either the title or the crown. However, notwithstanding all my efforts, I did not succeed in quieting any of them, for the gods, who willed that all this should happen, caused the soldiers to become more and more excited, and my resolutions to weaken, so that, towards the third hour, some soldier—I do not know who—snatched off his own necklace, and encircled my head with it, and I retired into the palace sighing, as the gods know, from the bottom of my heart. I well knew that I should confide in the divine omen, but it grieved me very much my appearing not to have remained, even unto the end, faithful to Constantius.

"Around the palace there was a great agitation. The friends of Constantius wishing to take ad-

vantage of the occasion, laid a snare for me, and distributed money among the soldiers, hoping that one of these two things would happen, either that the soldiers should begin to fight among themselves, or that they should all openly unite against me. Becoming aware of this secret snare, one of the officers in the service of my wife immediately communicated it to me, and when he saw that I did not take any notice of it, with the fury of an epileptic, he rushed through the streets shouting: 'Soldiers, strangers, citizens, do not betray the Emperor!' And, behold, the soldiers become excited, and, fully armed, they all rush to the palace. Seeing me alive, they rejoice as those who, against all hope, recover a friend given up for lost; they surround me, embrace me, bear me in triumph on their shoulders, and the intense enthusiasm that pervades them is something worth seeing. When I was in their midst, they asked me to consign to them the friends of Constantius, that they might punish them. The gods well know what a struggle it was to save them."[1]

Is it possible that Julian was absolutely sincere in his declaration of innocence and his affirmations of surprise and astonishment? This we may be permitted to doubt, without doing him great injustice. Constantius' treatment of him was such as to leave no question concerning the fate that awaited him. If he separated himself from his

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 363, 26 sq.

soldiers, he was a doomed man. He had no other defence but to rebel against the orders he had received. To save himself, he was obliged to demonstrate to Constantius that he had at his disposal a force superior to the latter's. It is quite natural to suppose that, in all these hesitations, supplications to the gods, and repeated protests, there was some acting. Ammianus relates, and Julian confirms, with great energy, that the gods had clearly demonstrated their wishes to him by means of a miracle. But these very opportune miracles are only experienced by those who expect them, in order to sanction that which they have already determined to do. The soldiers adored this mystical philosopher, whose grave studies did not prevent him from being ever the first in danger and in difficulties, and leading them on from victory to victory. Even on the battlefield of Strasburg they had wished to proclaim him Emperor.[1] Then he unhesitatingly refused, because the circumstances were not such as to necessitate his choosing between rebellion and death. But his continued successes in war and in peace, instead of weakening, intensified the suspicion and jealousy of Constantius, so that, to save himself, the heroic Cæsar was obliged to encourage, if not provoke, his proclamation as Augustus, which two years previously he had absolutely opposed.

That Julian anticipated and desired his high

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 110.

destiny, and was, therefore, not wholly ignorant of the military insurrection that raised him to the throne, is proved by a letter written, towards the end of his "Cæsarate," to his faithful physician, Oribasius. The dream that he there relates is too clear not to be the expression of a thought already conceived in the mind of the dreamer. He writes:[1] "The divine Homer says that dreams have two doors, and that, therefore, we cannot put equal faith in all their predictions. But I believe this time that thou, more than ever, hast seen well into the future, because I also have had to-day a vision similar to thine. It seemed to me that I saw a high tree planted in a vast hall, bowed to the earth, and from its roots there sprung a small one covered with blossoms. I was very anxious about the little tree, fearing that it might be carried away with the big one. As I approached, behold, the big tree is levelled to the ground, but the little one remains upright, pointing towards the heavens. At this sight I anxiously exclaimed: 'That tree is fallen! And there is danger that the offshoot also will not be spared!' Then some one who was wholly unknown to me said: 'Look well and take courage! The root has remained in the earth, and the little one is saved, and will, undoubtedly, become strong!'"

That this physician Oribasius had an important part in the manœuvres which preceded the election

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 495, 20 sq.

of Julian, and that he used his influence to awaken Imperial aspirations in the Prince, is by no means unlikely, and is, in fact, explicitly affirmed by Eunapius in the life of this same Oribasius.[1] It furthermore appears that Oribasius himself, in the Memoirs that he left, boasted of his share in the adventure, attributing also to Julian a more important part in the initiative than is ever admitted by Julian himself or Ammianus, from whom we gather the impression that the rebellion was an act of necessary defence. A curious fact, and one that might be considered as highly symptomatic, is that Julian, according to Eunapius, brought from Greece into Gaul the high priest of the Mysteries,[2] the Hierophant, as he was called, and did not decide to rebel until he had, with the greatest secrecy, accomplished the prescribed sacred rites. Oribasius and the faithful Evemerus were the only ones in his confidence. Knowing, as we do, Julian's superstitious soul, and how it had been rendered more so by the teachings of Maximus, it is easy to understand that he desired to consult the gods before deciding on such an important step, and that, consequently, the assistance of the Hierophant was most precious to him. But the circumstance of his having brought him from Greece to Paris cannot but give rise to the suspicion of premeditation. However, the facts are too uncertain to permit our building a secure edifice on this foundation. Our

[1] Eunap., *op. cit.*, p. 104. [2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

best plan is to follow the precise and vivacious account that we find in the manifesto to the Athenians and in the reports of the honest and impartial Ammianus.

The modern defenders of Constantius, of whom we have already spoken, and first among them, Kock, in his essay written with the most acute criticism and great erudition, pretends to see, in the revolt of Paris, a comedy enacted by Julian, who desired to find a pretext to rebel openly against the Emperor. But even if we were not impressed by the accent of truth that resounds in Julian's words, the psychological analysis, if we may so term it, of the men and the situation, is sufficient to persuade any unprejudiced observer not inspired by the demon of hypercriticism, that the fault in this historical dissension is entirely on the side of Constantius. First of all, we must remember that it is impossible to exculpate the latter from the responsibility of that terrible crime which was the destruction of his family, after the death of his father Constantine—that crime for which Julian could publicly call him "the assassin of my father, brothers, cousins, I might say the bloodthirsty executioner of all our family and relations in common."[1] Certainly against such a man the darkest prejudices may be justified. Suspicious of every one and of everything, Constantius was ever ready to lend an ear to calumniators. First among

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 362, 8 sq.

them, the Eunuch Eusebius, who always remained at his side as his principal counsellor, instigating him to those cruelties for which he had already a natural tendency.[1] This man continually incited him against Julian, in whom he saw a dangerous successor to the Empire. He experienced that envious hate which is generally inspired in base souls by those who are generous and strong. Eusebius was a worthy representative of the corruption and vice which reigned at the Court; Julian had all the honest simplicity and integrity of the studious scholar who lives, far away from intrigue, in the pure atmosphere of ideal aspirations. Eusebius must have regarded the approach of Julian as the beginning of his downfall, and, therefore, was incessant in his efforts to poison and prejudice the mind of the credulous and depraved Constantius. Had it not been for the tact and wisdom displayed by the Empress, Julian would not have escaped the suspicions of his cousin. These suspicions were certainly, for a moment, silenced by the increasing menace of the Germanic invasions, and Constantius let himself be persuaded by his wife to send his cousin to Gaul. And we will even admit that, at first, it was in good faith, since, after all, the most important question for the moment was to repress the threatened attacks of the enemy. But Julian's many successes, and the great fame that they brought

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 269, 6 sq.

him, rekindled the suspicions of Constantius, and, with the death of the beautiful Eusebia, the evil influences that surrounded the Emperor became all powerful, as there was no one to restrain them. In our opinion, the unexpected and inconsiderate order by which Constantius commanded Julian to send to the East the best part of the army of Gaul, was inspired by the desire to ruin Julian utterly. Constantius' position in the East, after the fall of Amid,[1] was certainly a difficult one, and Mesopotamia ran the risk of being entirely overrun and invaded by the Persians. Constantius, however, was not in need of soldiers, but of a wise direction of the war—a direction which was rendered impossible by the calumnious insinuations of the eunuchs who surrounded the Emperor, and of whom Ammianus gives a most curious picture.[2] At the same time, although Julian had succeeded by his valour in forcing the Germans back across the Rhine, his position was still a dangerous one, and there is no doubt that if Gaul had been left insufficiently defended, the invasions would have begun again.[3] Constantius, by leaving the Cæsar defenceless before the rising peril, wished that he, too, should have his share in the ignominy with which the Emperor had been covered in the East by the fall of Amid.

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 198, 5 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 153, 20 sq.
[3] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 217, 20 sq.

But the first and most important consideration is, that if Julian had not been convinced of the Emperor's hostile intentions, he would not have rebelled, because it was not in his interest to do so. Holding a high position, the sole representative of Constantine's family, still very young, covered with glory, adored by his soldiers, Julian had only to wait. The empire would naturally fall into his hands, as Constantius, who was fifteen years older, had no children, while, on the other hand, rebellion exposed him to the perils of civil war, which, in all probability, might have proved fatal to him. It, therefore, seems without doubt that Julian was forced into rebellion only to save himself, and he preferred to confront any danger rather than abandon himself to the fate which certainly awaited him. It is possible that, in the preparations for the rebellion, he took a more important part than he acknowledges, but it is unjust to place the whole of the responsibility on his shoulders.

Of this we are so convinced that we do not hesitate to believe in the sincerity of the overtures of reconciliation and compromise which he made to Constantius in order to avert a civil war. The risk was so great, and the issue of the encounter between the two so uncertain, that Julian, with his sober and clear judgment, naturally sought, by all the means in his power, to avoid it. And that his proposals were most favourable and generous is

proved by Ammianus and confirmed by Julian's own words.

Ammianus gives the text of the letter that Julian wrote to Constantius to acquaint him with what had taken place, and to propose acceptable conditions. These conditions were as follows:—Constantius must recognise and sanction what had happened; Julian engaged to send to his assistance every year a certain number of men and horses; Constantius should have the nomination of the Prefect of the Pretorium, that is to say, the Prime Minister of Gaul, but all the other officers, military and civil, should be named by Julian. At the end of his letter Julian demonstrated the inopportunity and peril of taking the Gallic troops into the East, accustomed as they were to their own country, and, besides, their presence was still necessary for the defence of Gaul itself. He also expresses the hope that the concord between the two Princes might redound to their glory and the good of the Empire.[1]

Julian's two messengers, Pentadius and the faithful Euterius, overtook Constantius at Cæsarea-Mazaca, a town of Cappadocia, where he was occupied in preparations for the Persian war. When the contents of Julian's letter were communicated to him at a solemn audience, Constantius flew into a fearful rage and expelled the ambassadors, refusing to ask any questions or listen to any explanations. He then sends, as his ambassador to

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 215, 10 sq.

Julian, the Quæstor Leonas with a letter in which he commands him to confine himself within the limits of the authority conceded to a Cæsar, and in proof of his resolution not to resign any of his rights he sends a long list of new nominations for the different offices in the government of Gaul.[1] Julian, who was excellently qualified worthily to play his part of pretender and rebel, assembled the soldiers and the citizens in the military camp, and ordered Constantius' decree to be read to them. When the reader arrived at the point where Constantius commanded Julian to confine himself to the prerogatives of the Cæsar, from every direction arose a wild and terrible clamour, and soldiers and citizens cried out together: "Julian Augustus by the will of the Province, the Army, and the Republic." Leonas departs, seeing the position desperate. Julian, in accordance with the conditions he had offered, accepted Nebridius as Prefect of the Pretorium, but cancelled the rest of the nominations made by Constantius, and chose, on his own authority, all the other officials.[2]

The indefatigable Julian was not satisfied with the new and supreme dignity with which he had been invested. Before the winter began, he recrossed the Rhine, and conducted a rapid and successful campaign against certain tribes of the

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 219, 10 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 219, 29 sq.

Franks, and, having arranged for the necessary defence, went to winter in Vienne.

During the winter 360–361, Julian again hesitated to take the initiative of war against Constantius. In the meanwhile he celebrated with the greatest pomp the fifth anniversary of his administration of Gaul, and presented himself, with his forehead encircled by a magnificent diadem of precious stones. Unfortunately, in the midst of these festivities, he was overtaken by a great misfortune, the death of his wife Helena, caused by the effects of a poison, which, according to Ammianus,[1] had been administered three years before in Rome, by the jealous Eusebia, not so much with the intention of killing Helena, as to prevent her from ever bearing children. This is a terrible accusation, and it sheds a sinister light on the drama of love that seems to have been secretly intermingled with the stormy existence of the Imperial philosopher.[2]

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 94, 13 sq.

[2] The mystery concerning the death of Helena was used by the enemies of Julian to tarnish his memory at the time when it was sufficient to vilify him to become entitled to honour and fame. We learn from Libanius how a certain Elpidius, who had sought to create difficulties for Julian in Gaul, and to raise the army against him (Liban., *op. cit.*, ii. 321, 10) circulated the calumny that Helena had been poisoned by a physician of Julian's suite, in accordance with Julian's own desires. Libanius rises, with all the strength of his honest affection, against this vicious lie, and on hearing that it was being propagated in Antioch by one of his friends and disciples, Polycletes, he breaks off all relations with him, and will no longer receive him in his house (Liban., *op. cit.*, ii. 316). To this Polycletes he addresses a discourse to demonstrate to him the vileness of the

About this time, Julian suddenly became aware of a fact that convinced him that he was in imminent danger, and this immediately put an end to his uncertainty and preoccupations. He discovered that Constantius was conspiring with the kings of the barbarians to injure him, so that, if he had not been able to put a stop to the movement at its outset, he would have found himself surrounded on all sides, and obliged, at the same time, to fight the combined forces of Constantius and the Germans, who had formed a coalition against him. He had, fortunately, been able to get possession of the correspondence between Constantius and King Vadomarius, and by a ruse had even succeeded in capturing that king, thus putting an end to the conspiracy.[1] "Constantius"—writes Julian to the Athenians—"incited the barbarians against me, called me his enemy, and paid them to devastate Gaul. He wrote to his lieutenants in Italy to be on their guard concerning those who came from Gaul, and commanded them to collect, in the neighbouring cities on the confines of Gaul, three hundred myriads of medimni of grain, and caused as many again to be prepared in the Cottian Alps, as if he intended marching against me. These are not words but proven facts. I had in hand, brought to

accusation, and the unworthiness of the calumniator, Elpidius, who is in every respect a most despicable man; he having already, once before, attempted to betray Julian, when he was magnanimously pardoned.

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 234, 18 sq.

me by the barbarians themselves, the letters that he wrote, and I myself seized the provisions that had been prepared.[1] It is true," continues Julian, "that Constantius had sent the Bishop Epictetus to assure me of the safety of my life. But he had not a word to say concerning the agreement, or the recognition of what had happened." And Julian well knew that the promises of Constantius were as evanescent as if they had been traced on sand. On the other hand, Julian concludes: "If I had decided to remain in Gaul and avoid the peril, I should have found myself shut off from everywhere, surrounded by the armies of the barbarians, and attacked in the van by his forces, and I should have perished, and that in a shameful manner, which for wise men is the greatest of misfortunes."[2]

Julian is, perhaps, guilty of some exaggeration when he accuses Constantius of having conspired with the barbarians to injure him. In the story told by Ammianus, it is all reduced to the episode of Vadomarius, and the correspondence between Constantius and the barbarian kings, which Julian claims to have had in his hands, is represented by the single letter to Vadomarius, and, judging from the reference Ammianus makes to it, this letter could not have been of much importance. Libanius, on the other hand, attributes great importance to this episode, and considers it as indicative of a

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 367, 27 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 369, 20 sq.

great conspiracy. But Libanius, always interesting from his pictorial representation of surroundings, does not merit much confidence as a narrator of facts,[1] for he is too often carried away by the charms of rhetoric. It is certainly possible that Constantius would not have repulsed the idea of having a barbarian as an ally against his abhorred cousin, and, still more, that the astute Vadomarius was willing, not only to further, but also to anticipate, the desires of the Emperor. We may admit, however, without doing our hero any great injustice, that, in his later narrations, he exaggerated many things in order to justify his actions. And even if Constantius had not yet committed the crime of high treason to his country, he was quite capable of this delinquency, and Julian well knew it.

During these months of uncertainty passed in Vienne, Julian's pretence of keeping up religious observances is most severely blamed, and is condemned as if it were an act of gross imposture. He was still hesitating as to the opportune moment in which to open the civil war, which he now saw was absolutely inevitable. And it was, therefore, natural that he should seek to surround himself with the greatest number of partisans, and avoid creating new enemies who might disturb him in the preparations for the undertaking. We know that Julian had been, for a long time, a convert to paganism, and although, for reasons of prudence,

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 558, 1 sq.

he kept it concealed, it was whispered about, and raised in the friends of the old *régime* the most flattering hopes. But this very fact rendered his position more difficult, as it tended to increase the antagonism of the Christians, whose suspicions were already excited, not knowing what might happen if he were victorious. So he felt it necessary to act in such a manner as to disarm their fears. On the feast of the Epiphany, solemnly celebrated by the Christians of Vienne, he entered their church and publicly offered prayers to the Christian God: "feriarum die, quem celebrantes, mense Januario, Christiani Epiphania dictitant, progressus in eorum ecclesiam, solemniter numine orato, discessit."[1]

It cannot be denied that, on this occasion, Julian's actions were more influenced by reasons of State than by the voice of conscience, and, from a religious point of view, he was certainly most culpable. Julian, however, was not only a politician, but a philosopher and a thinker. And the conscience of the thinker and philosopher must have protested against the equivocation. But sometimes in life these contradictions arise, and it is impossible to free oneself from them. In that supreme moment of Julian's career the emperor and the philosopher came into conflict with each other, and the force of circumstances decided that the emperor should silence the philosopher.

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 233, 12 sq.

But this philosopher, if we may be permitted to apply the term to such a mystic enthusiast as Julian, soon took his secret revenge. When the supreme moment arrives, Julian, before assembling the soldiers to announce to them their departure for the East, and the declaration of war against Constantius, secretly makes a sacrifice to Bellona.[1] Then, feeling as if he was consecrated and prepared for the hazardous enterprise, he presents himself before the army. He explains his plan of crossing Illyria, and reaching Dacia, while these regions are still undefended. When there, he will consider what is best to be done. He enjoins the soldiers to remain faithful to him, as he had already led them to so many victories. His discourse is welcomed with immense applause;[2] the soldiers, brandishing their swords, solemnly swear that they are all ready to die for him, and following the soldiers, all the chiefs and functionaries. Nebridius alone refused to join them, declaring himself under too many obligations to Constantius for past favours. Julian saves the honest "Legitimist" from the anger of the soldiers, but when he re-enters the palace, and Nebridius comes to him and asks, as a proof of goodwill, that he may be allowed to clasp his hand, Julian refuses with an irony not devoid of bitterness. "Dost thou believe"—he said—"that

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 236, 19 sq.—Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 369, 1 sq.

[2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 238, 12 sq.

thou wouldst be safe among thy friends if it were known that thou hast touched my hand? . . . Leave here, and go where thou wilt, in safety!"[1]

Once decided on his enterprise against Constantius, Julian executed it with the rapidity of lightning, and an audacity which revealed how circumstances could transform the meditative dreamer into a man of wonderful activity. He does not leave Gaul undefended, but entrusts it, with the largest part of the army, to the care of the able and faithful Sallustius. Then wishing it to appear that he is advancing against Constantinople with immense forces, he divides his soldiers into three corps, of which, one, under the command of Generals Jovinus and Jovius, was to cross Northern Italy; the second, led by Nevitas, was to pass through Rhætia, and Julian, later, with a faithful half-cohort, touched at Basle, and by way of the Black Forest, arrives at the banks of the Danube.[2] Thence he followed the river until he came to the point at which it became navigable, and there he embarked his troops, and continued his voyage, never stopping at any city or encampment, because he had carried provisions with him sufficient for the needs of his small troop. In the meanwhile, in Italy and Illyria, the report spread that Julian,

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 239, 1 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 243, 23 sq.

having annihilated his enemies in Gaul and Germany, was advancing with an immense army. This news was sufficient to spread terror and confusion, and Florentius and Taurus — two of Constantius' highest functionaries — abandoned their seats of government, and ignominiously took to flight, naturally fearing Julian's revenge, for they had not only calumniated him to Constantius, but Taurus had furthermore taken an active part in bringing about the coalition between Constantius and the kings of the barbarians.[1]

Libanius tells us that Constantius, not admitting any possibility of conciliation, had strongly fortified the high roads by which he thought Julian must pass to come from Gaul to the East. "But the latter, leaving the high roads in possession of the enemy, passed by one little used, short, and full of obstacles, as if Apollo guided him, and smoothed the difficult parts for him. Thus he escaped from those who would have detained him, and appeared, at the opportune moment, as though having risen from an abyss, like a fish that has escaped from a net, and hides itself under the waves of the sea, so as not to be seen by those on the shore."[2] Elsewhere the rhetorician expresses the great astonishment of his contemporaries at Julian's audacity in choosing this new road. "What should we admire most"—

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 268, 10.
[2] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 388, 8 sq.

he exclaims—"thy vigilance, or the bravery of thy followers, or the new way, which being almost always on the water, gave no signs of thy movements until they were accomplished, while the enemy were expecting thee by land; or sailing thy ships on the waters of a country inhabited by barbarians, or the beautiful gifts that they brought to the river banks, so that thy fleet might come nearer to them? . . . I love the Danube, which appears to me more beautiful than the beautiful Enipeus, more serviceable than the life-giving Nile, because it has borne on its propitious waves the ships that brought liberty to the world." [1]

On the Lower Danube, at Sirmio, the then capital of the province, he found Lucillianus, who, in all haste, had gathered together the few soldiers he could find in the neighbouring cities, in the hope of resisting the unexpected invasion. But Julian, having arrived at Bononia, the present Banostar, near Sirmio, disembarks, and sends Dagalaif to surprise Lucillianus. The attempt is a complete success, and Lucillianus is conducted into Julian's presence. The general of Constantius is dazed and trembling, but Julian courteously presents to him the Imperial purple to kiss. And Lucilianus, reassured and elated, exclaims: "It is an incautious and bold undertaking, O Emperor, to venture with so few followers into a

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 417, 2 sq.

foreign country!" And Julian, with a bitter smile, replied: "Reserve these words of prudence for Constantius! I offered thee the insignia of my majesty, not because I desired thy counsel, but because I wished to calm thy fears!" [1]

During the same night Julian advances towards Sirmio, and here all the citizens and the soldiers go out to meet him with torches and flowers, proclaim him Augustus, and carry him in triumph to the Imperial palace. Happy because of this first and great success, Julian, contrary to his usual austere habits, offers to the city a spectacle of races. Then, on the third day, impatient of idleness and delay, he hastens to occupy the pass of Succea, in the Balkans, in order to make himself master of the road to Constantinople, and confides its defence to the faithful Nevitas. Returning again to Nyssa, he arranges for the administration of Pannonia Secunda, and, as it is now entirely under his control, he calls the historian Aurelius Victor to rule over it, and sends a manifesto to the Senate in Rome, in which he denounces Constantius, and notifies his assumption of the Empire.[2]

In the meanwhile Julian's military position became perilous. He had found at Sirmio two legions whose fidelity he could not entirely trust, and he desired to free himself from them by

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 244, 8 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 246, 10 sq.

sending them into Gaul. But these legions were displeased with their new destination, and still more so their leader Nigrinus, a native of Mesopotamia. They set out from Sirmio, but when they reached Aquileia, they closed the gates of the city, and declared themselves, together with the citizens, partisans of Constantius.[1] Aquileia was a very strongly fortified town, and its siege would have occupied much time. Julian orders Jovinus, who was arriving from Italy with the greater part of the army, to encamp around that city, and to do his best to avert the danger. But, at the same moment, clouds began to obscure the horizon in Thrace. The troops of Constantius, after having been reorganised, advanced against the pass of Succea under the leadership of Martianus. If Constantius had arrived from the East before Julian had defeated the neighbouring armies, the latter would certainly have been lost. Libanius, however, does not doubt that the victory would have rested with Julian, even in the case of a battle betweeen the two cousins. "And if it had been necessary"—Libanius writes—"to decide the controversy by war, the issue would not have been different. Perhaps blood would have been shed, but very little, and that vile, since, with the exception of a few battalions who remained faithful to Constantius, all the soldiers lived for thee, and seemed to run to thee to be organised and

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 247, 12 sq.

commanded."[1] But Julian did not share the views of Libanius, which were evidently inspired by the rhetorician's adulation of, and affection for, the victor. On the contrary, Julian was much impressed by the extreme gravity of the situation. He decided, for the moment, to abandon the assault of Aquileia, for which he would arrange later, and calls to his assistance the army left in Illyria—an army which has proved itself faithful and true in the trying campaigns against the barbarians. Displaying the genius of a truly great captain and organiser,[2] he prepares for a desperate war, when an unexpected event caused the tempest to disperse, and raised him in an instant, and without an effort, to the summit of power.

While Julian was approaching Constantinople as usurper, Constantius was at Edessa, embroiled in the Persian war. The announcement arrived at Edessa that Julian, after having rapidly traversed Italy and Illyria, had already occupied the pass of Succea and was preparing to invade Thrace. Dismay and fury alternated in the soul of Constantius, but he was not the man to lose courage when civil and domestic discords were concerned. He assembles the army, exposes Julian's treachery, and invites them to punish the rebel.[3] The army

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 416, 18 sq.
[2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 252, 15 sq.
[3] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 255, 13 sq.

applauds him, and he, having arranged the Persian difficulty as well as he could for the moment, sends ahead the two generals, Arbetio and Gomoarius—the latter, a personal enemy of Julian—with a strong body of troops. Constantius himself was to follow almost immediately. In fact, he goes to Antioch, but impatient of all delay, intolerant of repose, and tormented by sinister presentiments, he departs immediately for Tarsus. Fatigue, anger, and agitation had greatly impaired his health. At Tarsus he is seized with a slight fever; but he affirms that a change and activity will be beneficial to him, so he pursues his journey, and travelling by a most difficult route, arrives at Mopsucrenæ, on the confines of Cilicia. He wishes to leave the following day, but is prevented by the violence of the fever, of which he soon dies, having, as is reported, designated as his successor his cousin Julian, which was, perhaps, the only generous act of his life. As soon as Constantius had expired, the chiefs of the army met in council, and decided to send two ambassadors to Julian, Theolaiphus and Aligild, who, in the name of the army, should invite him to assume, without delay, the government of the whole Empire.[1]

Julian, having received this unexpected embassy, and, as Ammianus says, "*in immensum elatus*," loses no time, and accompanied by all his troops and an immense crowd of people, advances towards Constantinople. It was a rejoicing and a triumph

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 258, 13 sq.

never before witnessed. It looked like the procession of a god. The unexpected change from the anxiety of a terrible war to be waged throughout the Empire, to a satisfactory arrangement with the approbation of all, was so sudden as to appear almost a miracle. "When it was known"—Ammianus says—"that he was nearing Constantinople, all the people rushed out to meet him, without distinction of sex or age, almost as if he were a celestial apparition. He was received on the Ides of December with the respectful homage of the Senate and the applause of the populace, in the midst of an immense crowd of soldiers and civilians. Julian advanced among this orderly multitude, and all eyes were turned towards him, not only out of curiosity, but with great admiration. It seemed, in fact, a dream, that this youth of slender figure, already noted for his heroic achievements, should, after bloody combats against kings and nations, pass, with unheard-of rapidity, from city to city, everywhere receiving the immediate submission of men and of things, and finally, by divine will, assume control of the Empire without any injury to the Republic."[1]

Who could ever have imagined that, in less than two years, the dream would have vanished, and that this youth, to whom there seemed opened a future full of glory and success, would perish, leaving behind him no other record than that of

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 266, 23 sq.

having miserably dissipated his strength and the marvellous gifts with which he was endowed, in the insane attempt to bring about a religious restoration!

Having entered triumphantly into Constantinople, Julian's first wish was to purify its moral and political atmosphere. But in this he was not very successful, or, at least, did not prove himself exempt from the habits of his time. He allowed himself to be influenced by a feeling of vengeance, and sanctioned the condemnations pronounced by a Commission of Inquiry appointed by himself to judge the most influential men of Constantius' reign, among whom he knew, or supposed, that he had personal enemies. The honest Ammianus bitterly deplores some of these condemnations, and attributes the principal blame to Arbetio, a general of Constantius, a wicked and depraved man, whom Julian had unfortunately called to his council, and who tried to gain the favour of his new master by an excessive severity and by intensifying Julian's feelings of revenge. This unfortunate episode is undoubtedly a great blot on Julian's career. Nevertheless, if his vilifiers use this as an argument to detract from his fame, they should, in the first place, remember that Julian, notwithstanding his exceptional gifts, was influenced by the spirit of his age, and that, although we might wish that he had shown

himself more magnanimous, we must not forget that, coming after Constantine and Constantius, two of the most cruel emperors that ever existed, he only once followed their example, and that to a small extent. Three of the five condemnations to death which he sanctioned were approved by Ammianus because of the number and gravity of their crimes—those of Apodemius, of Paul, and of the Eunuch Eusebius, courtiers and favourites of Constantius. The condemnation of Palladius does not seem to have been sufficiently justified, and, according to Ammianus, that of Ursulus was most reprehensible; he was an officer in charge of the imperial largess, and, by his parsimony, had gained the hatred of the army during Constantius' Persian campaign.[1] Ursulus was undoubtedly a victim of Arbetio's vengeance, and Julian, with culpable weakness, made no effort to save him. Later on, he felt remorse for what he had permitted, and strove to attribute the responsibility of this injustice to unbridled military resentments,[2] and, as Libanius narrates,[3] tried to make amends by leaving to the daughter a great part of her father's property. Excepting these, there were no other condemnations to death. All Julian's many enemies who had never ceased to pursue him with accusations and calumnies, were only condemned to exile, and this gave Libanius an opportunity to

[1] Amm. Marcell, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 222, 5 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 268, 21. [3] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. 573 sq.

exalt the clemency of Julian, who spared them, and contented himself with sending them to live on the Islands, where, "wandering about in solitude, they might learn to hold their tongues." [1]

But these reprisals, although partially justified by the habits of the time, and by Julian's natural resentment against those who had so cruelly persecuted him all his life, certainly are not to be admired, and the condemnation of Ursulus is to be severely censured; on the other hand, he deserves the highest praise for the manner in which he cleansed the court of Constantinople from the crowd of parasites, who lived on magnificent salaries and amassed wealth infamously gained.[2] Ammianus does not hesitate to criticise his hero; he observes that he was too precipitate, and did not exhibit the prudent and judicial spirit of the philosopher. But the picture that he presents of the court of Constantius well justified the radical expurgation accomplished by Julian. This expurgation is considered by Libanius one of the most praiseworthy of Julian's actions. The description that the rhetorician of Antioch gives of Constantius' court is still more terrible than that of Ammianus. "Here we see"—he exclaims—"a lazy crowd shamelessly maintained, a thousand cooks, the barbers not less in number, and still more numerous the cup-bearers, swarms of stewards,

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 573, 10 sq.
[2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 269, 13 sq.

and eunuchs thicker than flies on the cattle in spring, and innumerable wasps of all species. And this is easily understood, because, for the idle and the gluttonous, there was no refuge so secure as being inscribed among the servants of the Emperor."[1] And all this crowd lived by oppressions and excesses.[2]

At last Julian was able to put in execution the dearest desire of his heart, the desire that had been the secret motive of all his actions. "The time having arrived when he could do as he wished, he revealed to all the innermost secret of his heart, and, with an explicit and absolute decree, ordered that the temples should be reopened, that victims should be presented at the altars, and that the worship of the gods should be restored. And to render this decision more efficacious, the dissenting Christian bishops with their congregations were called to the Imperial palace and courteously admonished that, as all discord was allayed, every one without fear could worship according to his religion. Julian did this with the conviction that

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 565, 12 sq.

[2] The ecclesiastical historian Socrates, speaking of the expurgation made by Julian, and the expulsion from the royal palace of the crowd of cooks, barbers, eunuchs, and parasites of all sorts, remarks that few praised the young Emperor for this act, while a great many blamed him ; for in diminishing the magnificence of the royal palace, he diminished at the same time the prestige of the Empire, and Socrates here makes a very acute observation. "An emperor," he says, "may be a philosopher with temperance and in moderation, but a philosopher who wishes to be emperor passes the limits, and falls into absurdities" (*Socrat. Hist.*, p. 139).

liberty would augment the discord, and that later on he would not have to fear a people united against him. He knew by experience that there were no wild beasts as cruel to man as the Christians among each other."[1] Later on, we shall discuss this curious action on the part of an emperor who wished to restore paganism. But now we will follow him in his political career.

With his wonderful activity, Julian, during the months of his residence at Constantinople, attended to the administration of justice, and did not neglect military affairs; the banks of the Danube were provided with fortifications, and strongly garrisoned against the possible attacks of the Goths. Some advised him to make an expedition against these barbarians, to force them into complete submission. Julian, however, influenced, as we shall see, by a prejudice that later on led to his ruin, replied that he preferred more worthy enemies.

In the meantime, the fame of his power and wisdom spread all over the world, and ambassadors bearing gifts and demanding his friendship came from the most distant regions of India, the mysterious East, the North, and the regions of the Sun.[2]

But Julian was not the man to rest quiet and content in the midst of his good fortune. He dreamt of glory and of mighty enterprises. As

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 271, 4 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 273, 11 sq.

we have already seen, he appeared to possess a double personality; he was a thinker and at the same time a man of action, and exhibited, in the exercise of his different faculties, the same restlessness and intensity of life. The soldier and the leader claimed their part, and spurred him on to some great enterprise. Now, Julian was undoubtedly a man of his epoch, permeated with all the traditions of the Græco-Roman world, and shared that prejudice which had induced Constantine, together with the desire of flying from the city that recalled to him his crimes,[1] to transport the capital of the empire from Rome to Byzantium, believing that the centre of gravity of the civilised world was in the East, and that it required the greatest defence, because there the peril was greatest, and that it was there that they must save and preserve civilisation. The barbaric invasions and insurrections that obliged the Imperial armies to be continually fighting north of the Alps, and along the banks of the Danube, were, at the time, considered important episodes, but certainly not sufficient to compromise the structure of the empire. Even Julian, who had fought for five years, hand to hand, with the Germans, had not appreciated the extent of the peril, and foreseen the approaching revolution of the world. Imbued to the marrow with Hellenic culture, he lived over again the times in which

[1] *Zosimi Historiæ, recensuit Reitmeyer*, p. 151.

Greece had saved Western civilisation, by resisting, with immortal heroism, the armies of Darius and Xerxes. The idea of reviving those glorious wars and destroying the power of Persia, which again appeared as a great menace, had an irresistible attraction for Julian. But in this he was the victim of an illusion. Persia, as a power, was almost exhausted, and would never have seriously endangered the safety of the empire. Quite another affair was the danger from the barbarians. An emperor of genius would have gone to the root of the evil, and liberated the empire from the menace of invasions that threatened to destroy it. If Julian had followed the wise counsels addressed to him by the faithful Sallustius,[1] from Gaul, he would have left the Persians in peace, and, crossing the Danube, entirely subdued the Goths, thus forming, in the centre of Pannonia, an organisation of civilisation and colonisation which would have prevented the Eastern hordes from attacking the Germans and eventually driving them from their territories, and, in this manner, he might have truly saved civilisation. Or again, as he was master of all the forces of the empire, he might have returned to Gaul, and made this his point of departure for the invasion and subjection of Germany, thereby influencing, in a contrary direction, towards Persia and India, the tide of emigration that later proved so fatal to the empire and

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 316, 15 sq.

civilisation. But Julian could see and think of nothing else but Persia. In the year 337, King Shapur, or Sapores, as Ammianus calls him, took the initiative in war against the empire, and Constantius during his reign was constantly tormented by this preoccupation, because the war dragged along heavily without ever coming to a definite conclusion. When Julian, in open rebellion, directed his movements against his cousin, Constantius was able, as we know, to prepare to march against him, because of a temporary truce with King Sapores, which, although not officially agreed upon, was tacitly acknowledged. But things had remained in such an uncertain condition as, apparently, to justify Julian's enterprise. The unfortunate campaign which Constantius had conducted against the Persians, and in which, notwithstanding the magnitude of the preparations, he only exhibited weakness and cowardice, had naturally augmented their prestige to such a degree as completely to paralyse the energies of the Imperial army. Libanius[1] gives a vivid picture of the disheartening effect that the knowledge of the Persian superiority exercised on the soldiers. He says: "For long years the terror of the Persians had been so great, and so deeply impressed on them, that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that they feared them even when only represented in a picture." It is certain that seeing

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 593, 5 sq.

the courage of the soldiers at such a low ebb stimulated the heroic Julian to embark on the enterprise, with the intention of reviving the military spirit by the vigour of his actions and the force of his example, and in this, as we shall see, he succeeded. Libanius adds: "The discouraged men were led by this hero against the Persians. And they followed him, remembering his past valour, believing that they might pass unscathed, even through fire, if they followed his commands."

Fixed in his determination to transport his army to the banks of the Euphrates, in the summer of 362, the Emperor leaves Constantinople and goes to take up his residence at Antioch, in order to be nearer the seat of war, and to make this city the centre of the great preparations which, with his knowledge of military affairs, he deems necessary for such a bold undertaking. In the journey from Constantinople to Antioch he passes through a region that is most dear to him, and replete with associations. He stops at Nicomedia, and laments with the people over the ruins of their erstwhile magnificent city, which had been lately destroyed by an earthquake, and he renews here his acquaintance with the friends and companions of his school-days. He touches at Nicæa, and runs over to Pessinus to visit and worship at the ancient sanctuary of Cybele, the Mother. And here,

during the night, this indefatigable man writes his long discourse about the Mother of the Gods, one of the principal documents of his mystical and mythological doctrines. Then, passing through Tarsus and Ancyra, he enters Antioch, "*orientis apicem pulchrum*," as it is called by Ammianus, who was born there; he was received with immense applause, and welcomed as a star of salvation newly arisen in the East.

Julian remained in Antioch from August 362 to March 363. These few months constitute one of the most interesting episodes in the life of Julian. Antioch was a city given up to pleasure and luxury. Its population, fickle-minded, noisy, and slanderous, cared only for diversions and public pageants. They received the young Emperor with enthusiasm, because they expected to find in him a promoter of their pleasures and an example of dissoluteness. Their disillusion was bitter and profound. Julian administered justice with the most perfect equity and temperance, occupied himself with the economic conditions of the city, regulated the prices of food-stuffs, arranged for its provisioning, supplied all things needed for the municipal services, was, in short, an exemplary sovereign; but he continued to live according to the severe habits to which he had been accustomed, exhibiting a decided distaste for all public pageants, and devoting himself with such an absorbing intensity to his civil and military duties that the enraged Antiochians soon passed

from wonder and admiration to ridicule and hate. This youth, who scorned all the seductions of Oriental luxury, who affected roughness in his bearing and his dress, who wore a beard, and did not possess any of the qualities they hoped to find in him, became thoroughly antipathetic to them, and when they found that their impertinence remained unpunished, the poetasters and libellers took advantage of the indulgence of the Emperor, and circulated in Antioch satires and epigrams which formed the delight of that frivolous city. But Julian, although he did not punish the offenders, as other emperors would have done, satisfied himself with a more spirited revenge, of which we will speak later on.

With feverish haste, the preparations having been finally accomplished, the troops distributed in the various garrisons, and an immense and solemn sacrifice offered to Jupiter, in March of the year 363, Julian leaves Antioch for the Euphrates. A little while before he set out he received a letter from the King of Persia, who, alarmed at the great fame of the young warrior, prayed him to receive his ambassadors and amicably to arrange the disputes by a treaty. "Every one,"—writes Libanius, —"applauding and congratulating, insisted that he should accept. But Julian threw the letter from him with scorn, and said that it would be most contemptible to treat with the enemy while so

many cities lay in ruins. And he replied that there was no necessity for ambassadors, as he would be there very soon himself, to see the King."[1] A haughty response, an eloquent proof of the complete blindness and foolish obstinacy of the Apostate, possessed by a devil, as the Christians said, hurled down a precipice by the hand of God. He recommended the King of Armenia, his ally, to hold himself in readiness to execute the orders he might receive. In leaving Antioch, he nominated Alexander, a severe administrator, Prefect of Syria, affirming that only severity and vigour could keep this insolent city in peace. The populace, repenting of their treatment, followed him to the gates and wished him a happy return; but he harshly replied that they would never see him again, for, when he returned from Persia, he would winter in Tarsus. It does not seem, however, that the Antiochians were resigned to this species of decapitation that threatened their city, as, in a letter from Julian to Libanius, in which he describes his journey as far as Hierapolis, we read that, at Lytharbos, his first resting-place, he was overtaken by the Senate of Antioch, with whom he had a secret conference. Julian does not reveal the result of this meeting, but promises Libanius to tell him all about it if the gods permit him to return.[2] But it is certain that a peace was arranged between the Emperor and

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 577, 7 sq.
[2] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 516, 4 sq.

the city—a peace greatly advocated by the Antiochian rhetorician, who, to further its conclusion, wrote two discourses, one to the Antiochians to induce them to make amends for their offences against the Emperor, and the other to the Emperor himself to persuade him to pardon them.

With his habitual rapidity of movement, Julian passed the Euphrates and arrived at Carrhes, from which place there were two roads: one traversed Mesopotamia from west to east, extending as far as the Tigris; the other descended south along the Euphrates. By the first road he sends Procopius and Sebastian with a force which, according to Ammianus,[1] was composed of 30,000 men, and, according to Zosimus,[2] of 18,000. This army was to defend his flank, and, if possible, unite with Arsaces, the King of Armenia, while the Emperor himself descends the Euphrates with his army of 65,000 men. From Carrhes he goes to Nicephorium, where he celebrates the solemn festival of the Mother of the Gods, and where he received the Saracen ambassadors who prostrated themselves reverently before him. From this town he goes to Circesium, at the confluence of the Aboras with the Euphrates. Here he is present at the arrival of the immense fleet he had prepared, and which was composed of a thousand ships of transport laden with provisions

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 311, 14.
[2] Zosim., *op. cit.*, p. 228, 1 sq.

and implements of war, fifty battleships, and others with materials for the construction of bridges.[1] At Nicephorium Julian receives a letter from his faithful Sallustius, whom he had created Prefect of Gaul, and who implores him not to embark on this fatal enterprise, or to commit such an irreparable error. Julian does not heed the warnings of his devoted friend. But, even in his own camp, amongst those who surrounded him, there was a party opposed to the expedition. And this party sought to influence Julian's mind by interpreting, as unfavourable, all the signs and omens concerning the expedition. In the restoration of paganism, inaugurated by Julian, superstition, as we shall see, held a very important part. Neo-Platonic mysticism, which was founded on the continual intervention of the supernatural in the things of this world, and which was a mixture of myths and symbols, attributed an immense importance to the science of augury. The man who possessed the key thereof might read his future in the signs which surrounded him, and rely on their infallible counsel. Julian was, therefore, accompanied by a crowd of augurs and soothsayers whom he consulted on every occasion. Now, it is curious that these augurs always gave him unfavourable interpretations, with the design of putting an end to the enterprise. These augurs

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 312, 20 sq.—Zosim., *op. cit.*, p. 229, 1 sq.

only predicted disaster and death. It is therefore evident that their interpretations responded to the desires and convictions prevailing at least among a part of Julian's army. And it is still more curious that he who was possessed by the fixed idea of going forward, interpreted these same signs in a contrary sense and one favourable to his wishes. To put an end to all hesitation, Julian assembles the army around him, and pronounces a most inflammatory discourse, to which the soldiers and, especially, those of the tried and faithful Gallic legions, respond with acclamations and cries of enthusiasm.[1]

The account of this expedition, written by Ammianus, who took part in it and related what he himself had seen, is one of the most interesting narratives that has been transmitted to us from antiquity, and well worthy to be classed with the "Commentaries" of Cæsar and the "Anabasis" of Xenophon. The account of Ammianus is, in part, completed by the story told by Zosimus,[2] who obtained his information from other sources than Ammianus, and by what Libanius narrates in his "Necrological Discourse." The last-named does not pretend to give a strictly military relation, such as that of Ammianus, nor a succinct and orderly account, like that of Zosimus. He presents, however, scenes and episodes that vividly

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 319, 1 sq.
[2] Zosim., *op. cit.*, pp. 226–64.

reproduce the man, the country, and the atmosphere.

What we most admire in these narratives is the true spirit of heroism that Julian displays in every act and word. The wisdom of the commander, who foresees all and provides for all, the incomparable bravery of the warrior, the magnanimity of the conqueror, the perfect communion of his life with that of his soldiers, the art with which he knows how to gain their affections, now blaming them, now praising them, anon exalting the importance of the enterprise in which they have embarked—these are wonderful gifts, which, being united in a single man, make him, undoubtedly, one of the most noble and conspicuous figures in history, and certainly the most noble in the decadence of the Empire.

But was there ever a greater error of judgment than that which had led Julian into this mad enterprise? He said to his army: "I will place the Persians under the yoke, and will thus restore the tottering Roman Empire." This was a species of suggestion that all the emperors, good or bad, had transmitted to each other. And while they were dissipating their strength in this foolish undertaking in the mysterious regions of the north, a whirlwind was brewing that was fated to overthrow every one and everything.

The cities of Anatho and Macepractas having surrendered almost without making a defence,

Julian encountered the first obstinate resistance at Pyrisaboras, on the Euphrates. In this place the Emperor achieves prodigies of valour, throwing himself under the *testudo* of the shields, and hacking down the gates of the city, while around him a hail of projectiles fell from above. But as the defenders continued to resist, he caused a gigantic war-machine to be constructed, which inspired so much fear that the enemy was reduced to surrender, and implored the assured magnanimity of the Emperor, who, after taking Pyrisaboras, continues his triumphant march, overcoming all obstacles, and surmounting the difficulties of a country intersected by canals for irrigation, and artificially inundated.[1] He besieges the city of Nahrmalcha, and, during a very dangerous reconnoitring expedition which he made to acquaint himself with the surroundings, he would certainly have been slain, except for the wonderful readiness and bravery with which he defended himself.[2] Not succeeding in vanquishing the resistance of this fortress by his machines, he entered and subjugated it by means of a subterranean tunnel. Having subdued this stronghold, Julian, overcoming all obstacles, arrived at the immense canal which had been built by Trajan, to open up navigable communication between the Euphrates

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 11, 22 sq.—Zosim., *op. cit.*, p. 243, 7 sq.—Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 597–98.

[2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 12, 33 sq.—Zosim., *op. cit.*, p. 245, 1 sq.

and the Tigris. Libanius says that Julian, through the study of documents, had become aware of the existence of this canal, so that the prisoners, when he interrogated them, found it useless to pretend ignorance concerning his questions, and were obliged to reveal the secret of the construction.[1] The Persians had partially closed and dammed up the canal. But this was of great importance to Julian, for, by way of it, he would be able to enter the Tigris with his entire fleet. He, therefore, has this canal reopened, into which the waters of the Euphrates flow, bearing with it the entire Imperial fleet, followed by the army that passes over the canal on a bridge, and encamps on the right bank of the Tigris. The left bank is strongly defended by the Persians, and difficult of access. But the audacious Emperor desires to assault and conquer it. All his generals counsel him against this imprudent attempt, but Julian refuses to listen. During the night he sends some ships, manned by a few brave volunteers, to surprise the enemy's camp. But the enemy, ever on their guard, threw among the ships some inflammatory substances that set them on fire. The main body of the army, on the other bank of the Tigris, anxiously expecting the signal to embark, began to fear that the little band of heroes was lost. Then Julian, with that presence of mind which was always equal to the occasion, passes rapidly in

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 604, 10 sq.

front of the troops, crying, "Victory, victory! these flames are the signals announcing that the attempt has succeeded! . . . that the bank is ours!" and thus carried away by enthusiasm, the soldiers follow him, rush to the boats, and, traversing the Tigris, find themselves face to face with the Persians, and are obliged to fight.[1] Then a great battle took place, which, after many hours, ends in a complete victory for the Roman army. Julian, who during the day has given many proofs of his ability as a tactician, and achieved prodigies of valour, can now almost imagine that he is at the end of a splendid campaign, which recalls the ancient glories, and seems to indicate that the Empire has regained its grandeur.

But then an event happens as strange as it is unforeseen—an event so terribly fatal that it is sufficient of itself to prove how unbalanced was the mind of this gifted youth. The campaign might have been considered entirely successful. Julian found himself at the gates of Ctesiphon, the Persian capital. This city was only defended by a vanquished army. Julian's military prestige was in itself his most powerful arm. At any rate, the conqueror of Pyrisaboras and of Mayozamalchas, the most fearless of leaders, could not recede before this last effort. But what does Julian do instead? He remains five days at Abuzatha, near the battle-

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 22, 15 sq.—Zosim., *op. cit.*, pp. 255–58.

field where he has gained the victory, and calls a council of war, and the generals are unanimous in dissuading the Emperor from undertaking the siege of Ctesiphon, saying that it would be very dangerous to launch the army in this operation, as it is quite possible that King Shapur might come down on them with his whole army, which, up to then, had been kept far away from the scene of action.[1] This Julian, who heretofore had never been guided by any one's advice; who never even obeyed the augurs, except when their predictions tallied with his desires; who, despite the prayers and dissuasions of all his generals, attempted the dangerous passage of the Tigris, now agrees to renounce, for an imaginary peril, this last attempt, which would probably have been a glorious termination of the war. Who knows but that Julian had not previously decided on the abandonment of Ctesiphon? But why? Perhaps this restless adventurer had already wearied of the Persian enterprise, which now appeared to him too easy of achievement, or it had, perhaps, lost for him the fascination of the unknown. The glory of Alexander flashed before his eyes and dazzled him. His aspirations went beyond the Euphrates and the Tigris. The rivers of India attracted him with an irresistible force, simply because they were vague and distant. Libanius[2]

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 25, 22 sq.—Zosim., *op. cit.*, p. 258.

[2] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 610, 3. ἔτεινε τὸν λογισμὸν πρὸς τοὺς Ἰνδῶν ποταμούς.

says: "His thoughts tended towards the rivers of India."

Now, the difficulty of proceeding with the siege of Ctesiphon was an excellent pretext for launching the army in the adventure of a new enterprise in unknown lands. For, in fact, if it was difficult to go on, it was equally difficult to retire, and, with his numerous ships, ascend the course of the Tigris and Euphrates. Libanius justly remarks that it would have required half the army to tow the ships, and the rest would have been left powerless to defend themselves from the attacks of the Persians.[1] Julian then decided on a plan even more reckless than bold, namely, to abandon the waterways which had been, until then, his base of operations; burn the fleet with all the provisions it contained, to keep them from falling into the hands of the Persians; and direct his march towards the interior of the country, where he knows he will find fertile lands, herbage, and abundance of food. Now, without believing in the Persian conspiracy of which Gregory of Nazianzus[2] speaks, and of which he points out Julian as the foolish victim, still we must admit the probability, recognised by Ammianus,[3] that the unfortunate Emperor, ever ready to believe that which accorded with his own views, was misled or deceived by ignorant or

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 610, 10.
[2] Greg. Naz., *op. cit.*, p. 115, D.
[3] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 26, 5.

treacherous guides. His plan once established, the Emperor, with that promptitude of action which is an element of success in a wise decision, but a precipice of ruin in an evil one, immediately put it into execution. He set fire to all the ships with the immense amount of provisions they contained, only preserving twelve, which he kept with him, for the construction of bridges, and, followed by his whole army, he abandoned the left bank of the Tigris.

Julian's star is setting; he has but a few days more to live, and these are days of terrible anxiety, but glorified by a heroism that, in the midst of misfortune, appears most extraordinary. The guides betray him, and the army wanders about without direction. The position is rendered still more serious by the actions of the enemy. The Persians, having seen Julian's error and that through his own fault he had lost his base of operations, take good care not to risk another battle, but systematically prepare to burn and destroy the grass and grain of the surrounding region, so as to starve out the Roman army, which suffers, besides, from the bites of insects and inundations.[1] The expected aid from Armenia not arriving, and Julian seeing that it would be impossible to carry out his intentions, resolves to retire towards the north, so as to reach a more temperate region, which would afford his soldiers the necessary sustenance. For some days

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 27, 17 sq.

the Roman army proceeds with difficulty in its march through a country which had been devastated, and where they are constantly annoyed by the Persians, who attacked the rearguard and the isolated bodies of troops. The army of King Shapur followed the Romans very closely in their retreat, and the immense amount of dust that obscured the horizon was the indication of its presence. At last a battle is fought in the plain of Marangas.[1] Ammianus, who was an eye-witness of this battle, gives a most vivid and interesting account of the Persian army, in which were two sons of the King, numerous satraps all clad in the most magnificent armour, archers who were infallible in their aim, and trained elephants, terrifying those who beheld them. Before this appalling spectacle, Julian seemed to regain his presence of mind and the audacious assurance of the "*concitato imperio.*"[2] To prevent the Persian archers from making great havoc among his troops from a distance, he assembles, in a dense mass, his invincible soldiers of Rome and Gaul, and makes a dashing charge on the enemy's front, who, being unable to withstand the attack, take to flight, leaving the ground covered with their dead. This was a great victory, but a useless

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 31, 13 sq.—Zosim., *op. cit.*, p. 261.

[2] From A. Manzoni's "Ode to Napoleon I.," "il concitato imperio,—e il celere obbedir!" meaning the imperious ordering, and the prompt obedience it calls forth.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

one. For three days Julian's army remained quietly in camp, in order to recuperate their forces and attend to their wounded. Julian, who participated in all the hardships undergone by his soldiers, during the night of the third day, rises from his rude couch, in his usual serene frame of mind, and begins to write and study a book of philosophy, when, suddenly, the same Genius of the Empire appears to him which he saw in Paris on the night of his proclamation, when it insisted on his accepting the Imperial crown. Julian beholds it once more, but this time it seems melancholy, and with a dejected air leaves his tent, and abandons him. But the strong man was not discouraged, but said to himself, "The will of the gods be done!" and went out into the night, when, suddenly, he saw a falling star of singular splendour traverse the heavens and vanish. At dawn he calls for his Etruscan soothsayers, and asks them what they have to say concerning the apparition of this vanishing star. It is a sign of evil, they respond. All enterprises and attempts should be suspended for the day.[1] But Julian, who was superstitious more from principle than from conviction, although he never failed to interrogate the augurs, reserved to himself the right of doing that which he had previously decided upon, so, at the dawn of day, the army began to move. The large body of

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 33, 15 sq.

troops was already on the march, the flanks well guarded, and Julian was with the extreme vanguard, when he receives notice that the rearguard has been assaulted by the Persians. The Emperor, without waiting to put on his armour, snatches up a shield and rushes to their aid, but he has hardly arrived before he hears that the vanguard, which he has left a moment before, is also attacked. He returns to animate and encourage them, when he hears that his flank is also assailed by the enemy. This admirable warrior was to be found wherever the danger was greatest, encouraging, planning and leading the attack, and once again he succeeds in putting the Persians to flight. Julian, now certain of victory, joins in the pursuit, and forgetting that he is without armour, raises his arm to incite his soldiers to follow him, when a javelin —it was never known whence it came—passed through his arm, and pierced his breast. He tries to pull out the javelin, but falls from his horse, and is carried to his tent. When the first agony has ceased, he wishes to return to the battlefield, but his strength fails him, and he falls back helpless. The news of the disaster spreads like lightning, and the troops, who worshipped their Emperor, were so inflamed with rage and grief, that their feelings spurred them on to vengeance. The Persians are repulsed with immense loss, and Julian can die in peace.

Who was it that hurled the deadly javelin

against Julian? The suspicion of treachery is by no means excluded. In fact, Ammianus relates that, some days later, the Persians, finding themselves on an eminence from which they could hurl both arrows and words on the enemy, insulted them *verbis turpibus*, calling them murderers of the best of princes, because, adds the historian, it was currently reported that Julian met his death at the hands of a Roman—"Julianum telo cecidisse Romano."[1] And, naturally, among the Emperor's friends, the suspicion immediately arose that it was a Christian who had struck the blow. Let us see what Libanius has to say concerning it.

The account of Julian's death given by Libanius accords in every respect with that which we have already heard from Ammianus. He also describes the Emperor in the thick of the fight, spurring his horse in the direction in which the attack of the enemy was most violent, sending companies to assist where the battle raged the fiercest. Victory was assured. "Ah!"—exclaims Libanius—"O gods, O demons, O the uncertainty of fortune! what memories do you recall to me? Is it not better that I should keep silent, and close this discourse at its most acceptable part?"[2] "No," continues the orator, "it is better that I should speak, and deny the false report concerning the death of the Emperor, namely, that Julian was

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 27, 20.
[2] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 612, 10 sq.

wounded by a Persian javelin. Libanius is convinced, as we shall see, that the blow came from one of Julian's own men, and he gives us to understand that it was a Christian. The Persians, worn out and dispirited, were about to retire, with the intention of sending, the day after, to propose a treaty of peace. But there suddenly arose a slight confusion in the victorious army, because one part of it went on too far for the other part, which was still on the defensive, and, at the same time, the battlefield was obscured by clouds of dust raised by a sudden gust of wind. Julian, followed only by an orderly, was riding in advance to unite the two parts of the army that had separated, when he was struck by a javelin, and, as he was without armour, it passed through his arm, and entered his side, inflicting a mortal wound. "The hero fell to the ground, and, seeing that the blood gushed forth violently, and wishing to conceal the fact, he quickly remounted his horse, and, as the bloodstains revealed the wound, he cried out to his men not to be anxious, as it was not mortal. So he said, but he was vanquished by cruel Fate!" Who wounded him, then? asks Libanius. It was certainly not a Persian, for although great prizes were offered to any one who could prove that he had aimed the blow, no one presented himself. Libanius here bitterly remarks: "They permitted us to seek the murderer in our midst!" And here comes the insinuation against the Christians. The murderer,

continues Libanius, must be sought among those "against whose interest it was that Julian should live, and they were those who acted contrarily to the laws, who already before had tried to ensnare him, and who now, finding the opportunity, had committed the crime, prompted by their wickedness, that was powerless under his reign, especially in what referred to the worship of the gods, to which they were greatly opposed."

Sixteen years afterwards, when Theodosius was called to rule over the East, Libanius repeated the accusation, and not being aware of the Christian tendencies of the new Emperor, addressed a discourse to him, in which he tried to persuade him to vindicate Julian, and also to excite his wrath against the Christians, whom he pointed out as the true culprits. He said that Julian was killed by a certain Tajenus—*Ταιῆνός τις*—who obeyed the orders of his superiors, and expected a recompense from those to whose interest it was that Julian should perish,[1] and who, in the midst of the universal grief, rejoiced at the great misfortune. The allusion to the Christians in the discourse of Libanius is clear and unmistakable, and, most probably, in the original discourse, it was not an allusion, but an explicit affirmation, because this *Ταιῆνός τις* is so singular, and in the manuscripts so varying, as to render most probable the supposition that Christian

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 32, 1 sq. *ὃις ἦν ἐν σπουδῇ τὸν ἄνδρα ἀποθανεῖν.*

hands altered the primitive *χριστιανός τις*. As Libanius says, it was a notorious fact that Julian was murdered at the instigation of those who were opposed to the worship of the gods; for, as long as this worship existed, they found themselves silent and powerless.[1] In the public squares, and in the corner of the streets, it was whispered how the drama had been arranged.[2] But the silence imposed by Julian's successors prevented the revelation of the truth.

These accusations made by Libanius lack precise proof, and have against them the silence of Ammianus and Zosimus, who, having no interest in concealing the crimes of the Christians, would unhesitatingly have revealed them, had they been proved. And, on the other hand, it is not unlikely to suppose that, in the confusion of the battle, amidst the clouds of dust which (according to all accounts) filled the air, the Emperor might have been casually struck by a weapon not directly aimed at him. But we must also admit that it is not contrary to all probabilities that the murderer was a Christian fighting among the Imperial troops. The hatred of the Christians against this Emperor, who threatened to wrest from them the victory they had gained over the ancient world, was so intense as to induce them to commit any excess. Besides, the world, Christianised in appearance, was so far

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 48, 1 sq. *ὧν τιμώμενον ἀπεπνίγοντο.*

[2] *Καὶ νῦν ἦσαν οἱ ἐν γονιαῖς λέγοντες ὅπως ἅπαν τὸ δρᾶμα συνετέθη.*

from being Christianised in reality, that crimes of blood inspired no repugnance, and were sometimes not only tolerated, but even justified and praised by the Christians themselves. Of this we have a luminous proof in the words of the ecclesiastical historian, Sozomenes, who wrote about a century after the death of Julian. He reproduces the passage of Libanius, and adds: "Libanius thus writing would make us believe that the murderer of Julian was a Christian. And perhaps it is true. For it is not improbable that some one amongst those who found themselves in the army, remembered that the Greeks always lauded to the skies the slayers of tyrants, as those who run the risk of perishing for the liberty of all, and thus courageously succeed in benefiting citizens, relatives and friends. Who then would think of bringing a reproof against one who would risk his life for his God, and for the religion that is dear to him?"[1] And Sozomenes continues, saying that, although he has no proof, he does not doubt but that the murder happened in accordance with the divine will. And he relates miraculous visions and predictions that clearly prove the intervention of the divinity.

The death of Julian, described by Ammianus, who was with the army, and probably an eye-witness, was well worthy of so great a hero.[2] He gathered

[1] Sozom., *op. cit.*, p. 517.
[2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 37, 19 sq.

around him his friends and familiars, who were overcome and in tears, and addressed to them a discourse which, although probably retouched by Ammianus, truly expresses the thoughts and sentiments of the dying Emperor. Julian is content to die, and accepts without a murmur the divine will. "The moment has arrived, my friends, when I must bid farewell to life, which I, as an honest debtor, cheerfully restore to Nature. Convinced of what the philosophers say, namely, that the soul is worth much more than the body, I think that we should not grieve but rejoice every time that the best separates itself from the worst. I also remember that the gods have awarded death to most pious men as the highest recompense. And I consider it an especial favour that I have not been obliged to give way to arduous difficulties, nor to abase or humble myself, knowing how misfortune overcomes the weak, but is vanquished by the strong. And I do not repent of anything that I have done, nor do I recall the memory of any grave offence neither in the time when I was relegated to obscurity and retirement, nor when I took possession of the empire. The gods accorded it paternally to me, and I believe that I have preserved it immaculate, ruling with temperance in civil affairs, and only making war for recognised causes, although success does not depend on the shrewdness of councils, for the results of an enterprise depend entirely on the divine will. As I was persuaded

that the aims of a just Emperor should be the happiness and welfare of his subjects, I was always inclined, as you know, to act with moderation, and, by my efforts, I have exterminated license, the corrupter of habits and persons. Content and fearless wherever the Republic, an imperious mother, placed me, I stood firm, ready to defy the storms of fate. I love and reverence this the supreme God who causes me to die, not by hidden treachery, or after a long illness, or by the condemnation of others, but has vouchsafed me a brilliant exit from this world, in the full bloom of my glory!" And here his strength fails him, and he finishes by wishing them to be fortunate and wise in the choice of his successor. Then he calmly distributes some of his things among his faithful friends, expresses himself grieved to hear that his friend Anatolius has been killed in the battle, lovingly reproves the weeping ones who surround him, and, requesting them to be silent, speaks with Maximus and Priscus of the sublime nature of the soul, and placidly expires. Libanius, who also describes the death of the heroic Julian, exclaims: "The scene was similar to that in the prison of Socrates; those present appeared as the disciples who had surrounded Socrates. The wound took the place of the poison, the words were equal, and the impassibility of Julian equalled that of Socrates!"[1]

In this death, which is admirable in every

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 614, 10.

respect, and is the revelation of a most pure and noble spirit, one thing is especially noticeable, the absolute silence concerning the religious question which had been the subject of Julian's greatest preoccupations. And it is truly singular that he did not attempt to oppose himself to the probable eventuality that a Christian emperor might be chosen to succeed him, and that, therefore, all his efforts towards the restoration of Paganism might prove fruitless. It is possible that Julian, when dying, had lost all illusions as to the efficacy of his attempts. While he remained in semi-barbarous Gaul, and kept the secret of his faith concealed within his breast, Julian could deceive himself concerning the tendencies of the Greek world. His disillusion began the day he was declared Emperor, and could solemnly inaugurate the restoration so dear to his heart. He was too intelligent not to perceive that the world was not with him. That bitter satire, the *Misopogon*, was his lament over a vanished dream. And perhaps the heroic recklessness with which he threw himself into that foolish Persian expedition, and the desperate eagerness with which he sought death, were only the hopeless expression of an inconsolable grief, over the absolute failure of the chief aim of his life and reign.

There is a legend that arose many years after Julian's death, and was first related by Theodoretus, a writer in the first half of the fifth century. It

says that Julian, feeling himself mortally wounded, cried out: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!"—*Νενίκηκας, Γαλιλαῖε.* None of Julian's contemporaries ever heard of this cry of agony that was said to have issued from the lips of the Apostate, who fell in the terrible combat he had attempted to wage against Christ. The simple fact of not finding it in Gregory, the great orator and disputant, who would not have missed the opportunity of adorning it with eloquent and sonorous periods, is sufficient to prove its legendary origin, and the late epoch in which it was invented. And, besides, the account of Ammianus, who was present at the moment of Julian's death, and the description of Libanius, prove that Julian, in his last moments, had no other thought than that of dying like a philosopher, serene and far removed from all earthly considerations. This desperate cry would have been a discord in the midst of the Socratic scene enacted around his deathbed. But this cry, even though it was not pronounced, might have found an echo in the thoughts of the wounded Emperor. All illusions had necessarily vanished. The cause he had defended was hopelessly lost. Even he, in the fulness of his power and glory, had not been able to overthrow triumphant Christianity. He being dead, there was no possibility of delaying the entire destruction of the ancient civilisation. The last hero of Hellenism, he had raised its banner, and again, for a short time, it was unfurled to the breeze,

but with him it fell, and it fell for ever.—Thou hast vanquished, O Galilean! . . .

But how is it possible to explain and justify Julian's attempt? Before replying to this question, it is necessary to consider the conditions of Christianity, when it became officially recognised, and the moral and intellectual forces which were opposed to it. We may then be able to understand how a man who brought to the Imperial throne a treasure of virtue and intelligence believed that the destruction of Christianity and the restoration of paganism was a great enterprise, and was one to which he could worthily devote his life. The great valour of the man gives a lively interest to the strange episode of which he was the hero.

THE DISCORD AMONG THE CHRISTIANS

The profound transformation in the Church during the years preceding its final victory, due to the gradual elaboration of its elements at the time of its intermittent persecutions in the second and third centuries, had bridged the abyss that separated it from the world. In morals, it had descended from the serene heights of the Gospel and of primitive Christianity, and was leaning towards Stoicism; in philosophy it had constructed a great theological edifice, employing the materials of Platonism; in worship its ceremonies had been modelled on those of the Mysteries. In short, it had succeeded in organising a practical Christianity that could be accessible to the world. The greater part of its intellectual patrimony was of extraneous origin, but this had been so thoroughly amalgamated with that which was essentially and peculiarly its own as to assure the continuity of its progressive development, while presenting itself severely distinct from eclectic paganism.

Paganism having lost the signification of the

naturalistic origin of its myths, tended also with Neo-Platonism towards the affirmation of divine unity. But such a tendency could only be satisfied by Christianity, whose monotheism possessed a power of attraction much greater than that of the symbolic monotheism of paganism, and could be admitted and understood by the most humble. Neo-Platonic paganism had also the ideal of returning to the divine, the sentiment of the immediate presence of God, and of eternal life; but it lacked the possibility of incorporating that ideal, of giving life to that sentiment in the person of a historic apparition, who would be, at the same time, its guarantee and its most pure representative. However, the development of Christian thought in the ancient world during the second and third centuries certainly served to prolong the agony of paganism, but necessarily, sooner or later, caused it to expire in the arms of Christianity, because it promoted and encouraged those aspirations which Christianity alone could fully satisfy. Added to this, Christianity had created a strong and disciplined organisation, while paganism was a disorderly system, in which the different cults were not subjected to any precise discipline. Paganism might be styled a religious anarchy. In Christianity, on the contrary, each community constituted an especial organisation under the control of a bishop, and, all together, they formed a union of forces that easily became the expression

and instrument of a single will. There certainly was no lack of dissensions, discords, and schisms in the young Church; but they were only passing incidents that did not weaken the substantial solidity of the ecclesiastical organisation, and always disappeared when a strong will pointed out the way of returning to unity.

This strong will appeared for the first time at the beginning of the fourth century in the Emperor Constantine and in the great Athanasius, and reappeared, with decisive efficacy, at the end of the same century in the Emperor Theodosius and the Bishop Ambrose.

We must now give a rapid glance at this disputatious century, in the midst of which Julian made his most extraordinary attempt. It is impossible to believe that Constantine's considerate treatment of the Christians was actuated, in the slightest degree, by religious sentiment. This treatment was initiated by the famous Edict of Tolerance, that emanated from the Emperor and his colleague, Licinius, and was given at Milan in the year 313, and afterwards led to the constitution of a State Church. Several years after the death of Constantine, a fable—for it could be naught else—was circulated among the pagans, namely, that the Emperor had embraced Christianity because he had been assured that the new religion had the power of washing away all sins, so that even the most wicked of men, once converted,

became immediately pure.[1] And it was an undoubted fact that Constantine needed to purge himself from the most terrible of domestic crimes, the murder of his son Crispus and of his wife Fausta. But Sozomenes justly observes that these atrocious crimes were committed by Constantine some years after he had embraced Christianity, and that, therefore, this fable would be inadequate to account for Constantine's attitude towards a religion that, until then, had always been persecuted.[2] It is rather a curious and symptomatic fact that neither Sozomenes nor other ecclesiastical historians found in this circumstance any reason to doubt the moral worth of the Emperor's conversion. Constantine was an able politician, and knew no scruples. He who rose upon the ruin of all his colleagues and rivals, and witnessed the inefficacy of Diocletian's persecution, saw, in the Church rightly organised, an instrument that, in his hand, might become most precious. He recognised the exhaustion of paganism, and the rising power of Christianity, and decided to use the latter for his own advancement. Libanius explains the conversion of Constantine by saying: "He comprehended that the belief in another God would be very useful to him."[3] And on this occasion the rhetorician certainly seems to be in the right.

[1] Zosim., *op. cit.*, p. 150. [2] Sozom., *op. cit.*, p. 331.
[3] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 161. *ἡγησάμενος αὐτῷ λυσιτελεῖν ἕτερόν τινα νομίζειν θεόν.*

Constantine, therefore, undertook to regulate the Church in respect of its constitution and dogmas, so that it might always remain under his authority. Above all, a violent and passionate man, it was absolutely impossible for him to participate in the Christian idealism. He intended that Christianity should occupy in the empire the same position that expiring paganism had occupied in the ancient State, that is to say, that it should be a weapon and a sanction to enhance the authority of the sovereign. To arrive at these ends, it was necessary that the Church should not be divided by internal discords, but should be organised in a perfect unity of doctrine and of discipline. Constantine when dying said to his son Constantius: "Thou wilt not enjoy the Empire unless thou wilt make God adored by all in the same manner!"[1] In twenty-four years Constantine had greatly modified his opinions. The Edict of Milan affirmed the absolute liberty of all worship based on a theistic faith common to all citizens. But political opportunism soon transformed the liberal philosopher into the dogmatic irreconcilable. However, it was not very easy to arrive at a unity of doctrine, because Christianity, increasing in strength, had blossomed out into a vegetation of schism and heresy that threatened to suffocate its growth. In order to prevent the evil from becoming irreparable, and at the same time

[1] Sozom., *op. cit.*, p. 432.

to create the instrument of which he had need, Constantine decided to give to the Ecclesiastical Parliaments, which were then convened to discuss controversial points, the authority of State institutions whose decisions would have the force of law. The institution of Synods or Imperial Councils was, on the part of Constantine, a master-stroke of policy, and had an immense importance in the life and development of the Church.

Constantine found that the great discussion in Christianity at that time was the Arian heresy, by which the fundamental principles of Christian theology were endangered. On becoming Hellenised, the religion of sentiment was transformed into a religion doctrinal and metaphysical, and the supreme difficulty Christianity had to encounter was that of preserving monotheism whilst recognising in Christ the existence of a second divine person. The idea of the divine personality of Christ had received its definite sanction on the day in which the two conceptions of Christ and the "Logos" were blended together. In the genuine Hebraic traditions the Christ or Messiah was a human personage who would restore to Israel its power and prosperity, while in the Hebraic thought, if I may so express it, as it was Platonised by its contact with Greek philosophy, especially in Alexandria, the Word—the Logos—was the rational principle by which God created the world and through which he manifested himself. Now, if the Messiah must have revealed himself in

a human apparition, this could not be imagined of the Logos, which in the Græco-Hebraic philosophy was only the symbol of an idea, an ontological and abstract force. No Hebraic thinker had ever dared to make of this symbol a divine personage, divided from God. Now, this passage from the symbol to the person was verified at the moment in which the attribute of Logos was given to the historical personality of Jesus, who had already been invested with the title of Messiah. In this way the personality of Jesus, comprehending in itself the office of Messiah and the personification of the Logos, took the place of the intermediary between God and man, with vaguely defined outline, in which the human and the divine mingled as the white and black in the burning paper of the celebrated simile of Dante. This figure gave one hand to Israel and the other to Greece, and the nearer it approached the latter, so much more was the character of distinct divinity intensified in it, and so much greater became the peril to which monotheism found itself exposed.

The Gnostic heresies tended to impel Christianity in this direction, at the foundation of which it would have found polytheism. But this movement was restrained by the prudent and efficacious action of the first systematic writers of the Church, by the apologists who occupied themselves especially with Christ in his character of Redeemer, clipped the wings of metaphysical fantasy, and, in intense con-

templation of the moral problem, closed their eyes to the philosophical one. But this presented itself, in all its importance, in the second half of the third century, when Alexandrine Christianity, under the influence of Clement, and, above all, of Origen, launched itself with sails unfurled on the boundless sea of Hellenic speculation. The influence exercised by Origen over the doctrines that were developed after him, has never been equalled by that of any other great thinker. In this respect he may be compared with Plato. For we may truly say that, for more than two centuries, scientific theology only occupied itself with the theses he had propounded. His doctrine, somewhat modified and tempered, formed the substratum on which was afterwards raised the cumbersome edifice of dogmatic Christianity. But his doctrine, eminently Platonic, is only a spiritualistic and idealistic allegory that weakens and essentially changes the historical basis of genuine Christianity. For Origen, as for Clement his predecessor, and for the Neo-Platonic philosophers who came after him, the *leitmotiv* is that of the Logos, of the cosmogonic Word, namely, the Logos considered as the generative power of the world. Origen distinguishes the world of sensations (*κόσμος αἰσθητός*) from the world of ideas (*κόσμος νοητός*). The Logos is the Idea of Ideas (*ἰδέα ἰδεῶν*), the origin of phenomena, the instrument of creation. But this instrument was created by God at a certain time, and is subjected to him. The

identity of the Logos with God is not only inadmissible, but in Origen's system is absolutely excluded, because in this system the existence of the Logos is only the first grade of the cosmological process, the first effect, which, in its turn, becomes the cause of subsequent effects. And for Origen the redemption of man depends on a more profound and clearer knowledge of this process. The verdict of Porphyry the Neo-Platonist seems the most just; he said of Origen, "His outer life was that of a Christian, but as far as his views of things and of God were concerned, he thought like the Greeks, whose conceptions he overlaid with foreign myths."[1]

The importance and the profound influence exercised by the doctrine of the Logos, considered as a divine essence generated by God but separated from him, and subordinate to him, renewed, under more scientific and measured forms, the Gnostic tendencies of the most ancient heresies, and conducted Christianity again to the verge of polytheism. Against this doctrine arose, or it is, perhaps, better to say, gradually developed, another doctrine radically diverse, called monarchianism, which, while according due significance to the redeeming action of Christ, held fast to its faith in the absolute personal unity of God, and, therefore, was adverse to all speculation that could lead to ditheism or tritheism. Monarchianism was, in its turn, divided

[1] *Eusebii Historia, recognovit Schwegler*, p. 219.

into two schools, dynamistic monarchianism and modalistic monarchianism, the first of which affirmed the essential humanity of Jesus, but also that he was infused with the direct inspiration and dynamic force of God, while the second believed in the incarnation of the Father himself, and considered Christ, when he appeared on earth, as a mode and a revelation of the supreme and only God, who had not divided himself, nor produced or originated any secondary divinity, but presented himself in his unalterable unity. Dynamistic monarchianism, in the second half of the third century, was represented by a man of great intelligence, Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, who, while he enjoyed the protection of Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, in whose name he governed Antioch, was able to confront those adversaries who accused him of heresy and worldly habits.[1] But when Aurelian conquered Zenobia, and Antioch fell under the power of the Romans, the combative bishop was obliged to cede his post to his rivals, and, as far as appearances go, his doctrine was silenced. But its germs still remained, and, later, they developed, and produced Arianism.

The modalistic monarchianism was an ancient doctrine which had already been taught in Rome in the first half of the third century. Preoccupied with the peril inherent in the conception of a divine personality, which in the Logos-Christ was affirmed

[1] Euseb., *op. cit.*, p. 277, 20 sq.

to be an emanation from the Godhead, that doctrine aimed at re-establishing the absolute unity of the divinity, identifying the Father with the Son, and making of the Son a personification, an hypostasis of the Father. This doctrine, though metaphysically most discreet, wounded the ideas dominating in Western Christianity, but was countenanced by Zephyrinus and Callistus, bishops of Rome. From thence arose a dispute of which the antimonarchian heroes were Hippolytus in Rome and Tertullian in Africa. On the other side a large number contended for the absolute unity of the Godhead, and were known also under the name of Patripassians, to indicate that, in the sufferings of Christ, they saw the sufferings of the Father. The last and most important among all these was Sabellius, from whom monarchianism took definitively its name of Sabellianism. Sabellius uplifted the banner of severe monotheism. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were one in essence, only three different names applied to one single Being. Placed between Hippolytus on the one side, and Sabellius on the other, Bishop Callistus, although inclined to monarchianism, devised a formula of conciliation that satisfied neither of the parties; it was terribly obscure, and composed of such contradictory phrases, that it introduced the mysterious and the incomprehensible as essential elements of theology, and opened the way to the dogmatics of future Orthodoxy.

In fact, Christian philosophy could find no other issue from the difficulties with which it had to contend from its birth, except in the forced union of monarchianism, which, by affirming the unity of the Godhead, became the pivot of the new faith, and Origenism, which with its manifold divine personalities responded to the metaphysical exigencies of the Greek mind. The great disputes of the third and fourth centuries were just the crucible in which was elaborated a doctrine composed by the fusion of two metals essentially heterogeneous, and forcibly reunited. The duel between Arian heresy and Nicene orthodoxy was the last act of this great theological drama in which ancient society, in the agony of the empire, had exhausted its strength, and from which was derived the doctrine that has swayed the thought of humanity until the present century.

Arianism, which in other words is the continuation of Paul of Samosate's monarchianism, had its origin in the school of Lucian of Antioch, who had been a disciple and friend of Paul of Samosate, and held, in the first year of the fourth century, an eminent place in Eastern Christianity. He died in the year 312, and the fame and authority of his name increased even after his death. He was one of the last victims of Imperial persecution. Conducted before the Emperor Maximinus, from Antioch to Nicomedia, he delivered an oration in defence of his faith, and then heroically died. This

man, excellent in every respect and full of sacred erudition, according to Eusebius,[1] had under his influence all the future heroes of Arianism, Arius himself among the first, and it is not improbable that the memory of the martyr, who had instructed them and gave such an admirable example, inflamed them with enthusiasm for the cause they sustained. However, Lucian had mixed a great deal of metaphysical water with the rationalistic wine of Paul of Samosate. For him the Logos-Christ, if not a humanised God, was certainly not a divinised man, he was a Being intermediate between the two—the first creature created by God from nothingness, with the office of elevating the rest of creation, of revealing to mankind the celestial Father, and of offering to them, by his life and death, an example of absolute perfection.

These are the currents whose encounter produced the incendiary spark; on one side the Lucianists, who, while recognising the special position of Christ, did not admit his substantial divinity; against these were the Origenists, who admitted the divinity, but affirmed, at the same time, its subordination: against both of these arose a third sect, the Sabellians, who saw in Christ the personification of the Father. These three parties, in one way or another, represented the rationalistic tendency in Christianity. But there was yet another party, and to this was reserved the success of the

[1] Euseb., *op. cit.*, p. 342, 10 sq. *τοῖς ἱεροῖς μαθήμασι συγκεκροτημένος.*

future. They acknowledged the distinction between the two divine Persons, but did not acknowledge the subordination of the one to the other, and maintained the unity of the essence. They propounded mystery. And just because mystery raised the human soul above rational contingencies, they had a force of attraction that assured them the final victory.

It was the Presbyter Arius, a most singular and interesting man, who kindled the spark that set on fire the whole Christian world, and, for more than a century, enveloped humanity in a conflagration of theological passions. He was a devoted disciple and admirer of Lucian, full of talent and energy; a writer, a poet, an acute logician, and possessed of a most powerful fascination and an undaunted courage. The young Lucianist came from Antioch to Alexandria, where he had been elected presbyter by the Bishop Alexander. For some time the bishop and the presbyter were in perfect accord; but the fire was smouldering under the ashes, for Arius, imbued as he was with the doctrines of Lucian, could not endure the theological tendencies of Alexander, which to him seemed inclined towards Sabellianism. Socrates relates that one day Alexander, in the presence of all the presbyters and the clergy, held a great discourse, dogmatising, to make a parade of his learning, concerning the Trinity, and teaching that, in the Trinity, exists the Unity.[1]

[1] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 8. *φιλοτιμότερον περὶ τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος, ἐν τριάδι μονάδα εἶναι φιλοσοφῶν, ἐθεολόγει.*

This appearing to Arius a favourable opportunity to revolt against the bishop, he bitterly accused him of Sabellianism. "If the Father"—he said—"generated the Son, the generated had a beginning of existence. From this it is manifest that there was a time in which the Son did not exist; and, necessarily, he must have been created from nothing." Around these propositions, which hold all the tenets of Arianism, and were easily accepted because of their clearness, raged the theological conflagration. But Alexander was able to withstand the peril. He had beside him another young presbyter, Athanasius, who, strong of soul and broad-minded, was for Arius a rival whom he could not easily overcome. And perhaps, at the bottom of this theological war waged about the very essence of Christianity, there was naught save the reciprocal antipathy of two domineering and intolerant youths who were not able to live together in the same place.

Upon this, Alexander convened a Council that solemnly unseated Arius and his followers, and sent to all the bishops of Christianity—"to the beloved and honoured colleagues of the Catholic Church wherever they be found"[1]—a long circular in which he called attention to the errors of Arius, and justified his condemnation. But Alexander committed the imprudence, perhaps voluntary, of

[1] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 9. *τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς καὶ τιμιωτάτοις συλλειτουργοῖς τοῖς ἁπανταχοῦ τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας.*

naming in his circular Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, as a dangerous heretic. Now Eusebius, distantly related to the family of Constantine, was a man of great influence, and one who would not tranquilly accept the imputations of Alexander.[1] Greatly incensed, he openly took the part of Arius, and bringing together the testimony of those bishops who agreed with him, ordered his colleague to annul the sentence that condemned Arius.

In the midst of this discord that inflamed all the East, Constantine suddenly appeared with his *Quos ego.* At the very moment in which he congratulated himself on the possession of a most precious instrument, this instrument broke in his hands. Sole and absolute master of the world, he believed that his word would be sufficient to calm the tumult, so he wrote to Alexander and Arius a letter that is a model of reasonableness and practical sense, in which he tries to induce them to arrange their differences, and to put an end to a theological dispute that threw discredit upon Christianity, and rendered it an object of contempt to the unbelievers.[2] But their passions were now at fever heat, Athanasius and Arius fed the flame, and the *Quos ego* of the Emperor was not sufficient to extinguish the fire.

The essential points in the doctrines of Arius

[1] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 11.—Sozom., *op. cit.*, p. 348.
[2] Socrat., *op cit.*,. p. 13.

were unfolded by himself in a treatise, partly written in verse, and entitled *Thalia*, portions of which remain in confutation of the same written by Athanasius. Arius said that he was persecuted because opposed to the affirmation that the Son was equal to the Father, and that he had emanated from him, that there was a unity of substance between the generated and the generator, and that the one and the other had coexisted without beginning and before time. God alone, who has become Father by the production of the Son, has not been generated, being alone and inorganic, and having his being in himself. Inexpressible in his essence, he is above all. Man can only speak of God negatively, saying that he is not generated, and that there is nothing above him, since he is the beginning of everything. Therefore the Son falls outside the divine essence. The indication of the Son as Logos, Word, Wisdom of God, is, by Arius, considered inappropriate because the Logos, Wisdom, Reason of God, is an inherent faculty of his essence. Arius thus combats the tendency of Origen's theology to offer, by means of the Logos, a second and yet always divine hypostasis, thus rendering impossible every evolution of the conception of God. The Son is not of the same substance as the Father. He is the creature created by the will of God from nothing—ἐξ ὀυκ ὄντων—to proceed to the creation of the world. He is not truly God —ἀληθινὸς θεὸς. The divine dignity that Arius

recognises in him comes to him as a gift from God, comes to him from his divinisation, consequent on his participation in the wisdom and the Logos of God.

Against this doctrine of Arius, Bishop Alexander, certainly at the dictation of Athanasius, proclaimed the inseparable unity of Father and Son. The Son, the Logos, is in the bosom of the Father, and, as the creator of everything, he cannot be created from nothing. From his eternal essence he is in direct opposition to the created, and for this reason there can be no difference between Father and Son, and it could not be otherwise, because the Father was always equal to himself and had ever in himself his Logos, his Wisdom, his Son. He is the Son not by a position (θέσις), from the interior to the exterior, but by the nature of his paternal divinity itself. Father and Son have an absolute unity. The mysterious relation by which the Son in one respect is distinct from the Father, and, in another, is one with him in divinity and in essence, is explained by the generation of the Son by the Father, which indicates a derivation of the one from the other, but a derivation that is beyond all conception of time. In short, it is a relation incomprehensible to man.

Admitting the premise of wishing to express the inexpressible, it is certain that these formulas of Alexander and Athanasius, in which we find a breath of Platonic Origenism, have a metaphysical

value much greater than those of the Arian formulas, which, notwithstanding their apparent rationalism, explained nothing. A rational theology is impossible. All attempts to found theology on reason have led to inevitable failure. Theology is all the more acceptable when it voluntarily parts with reason and wraps itself in mystery. If the Arians had resolutely abandoned metaphysical ideas and returned to the simplicity of the Gospel, they would have evinced an aspiration truly original. But from the moment that they decided to retain metaphysical theology with its mysteries, only administering it in small doses, so as to make it seem less offensive to the human understanding, they were predestined to be overcome by their rivals, who, intensifying the formulas of the incomprehensible and the mysterious, inebriated mankind and lifted it to an atmosphere in which it had, as in a vision, the presentiment of the supernatural —those visions and presentiments of which the inspired pages of St. Augustine are the most eloquent manifestations.

Constantine finding that all personal efforts to tranquillise these contentions were vain, and persuaded by his Minister for Theological Affairs, Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, decided, in the year 325, to convene at Nicæa a great Council, which was charged with establishing the definite formula of the Faith, and he gave to the deliberations of this Council the power and jurisdiction of Imperial

authority, thus hoping to impose the harmony that by persuasion he had not been able to obtain.

The Council of Nicæa was an assembly obedient to Constantine's will; it composed a formula which was to be accepted by all parties. But, in the beginning, there were many difficulties and fierce disputes. The Arians, led by Eusebius of Nicomedia, the future instructor of Julian, presented their Lucianist formula, but it was rejected by a majority of three hundred bishops. Then the Semi-Arians, the Origenists, came forward with a new formula, proposed by Eusebius of Cæsaræa, which, being most ambiguous and avoiding all precise determinations, might perhaps have satisfied every one. But the party that afterwards represented Orthodoxy would not be persuaded, and, instigated by Hosius, the intimate counsellor of Constantine, who was the chief mover in all the combinations behind the scenes of the Council, proposed a third formula, or rather a correction of the Eusebian formula, including the famous word ὁμοούσιος, consubstantial, which expressed the absolute identity and unity of substance of the Father and of the Son.[1] Notwithstanding that this word excited great, and we might say, reasonable opposition, because it was new, unusual in the theological vocabulary, and smacking strongly of Sabellian monarchianism, and therefore destined to annul the personality of Christ, the Council

[1] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 19.

yielded to the will of Constantine. In publishing and enforcing the deliberations of the Council, Constantine exhibited a zeal and energy, an epistolary and oratorical ardour, that proved how much he considered the calming of this theological wrath a supreme affair of State. And he decided to give the Council the sanction of his personal intervention, and also of ostentatious pomp and banquets, so as to magnify its splendour and importance in the eyes of the people.[1] The Emperor deceived himself with the idea that he had established peace in the Church, and, at the same time, created that instrument of government of which he felt the need.

But the illusion soon vanished. The Nicene formula became a new cause of discord. The ecclesiastical East was too essentially Arian and Origenist to swallow willingly this bitter pill presented by the Emperor. Constantine saw that his position was untenable, and although he persisted in making and receiving declarations of Orthodoxy, he began to change his attitude towards the most noted among those anathematised by the Council of Nicæa, and readmitted to his favour Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicæa.[2] And, a little later, encompassed by priestly and feminine snares, he went so far even as to permit Arius to return to Alexandria.[3] But Constantine

[1] Sozom., *op. cit.*, p. 357.
[2] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[3] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 50.

forgot to take into consideration that Athanasius had become Bishop of Alexandria, and that Athanasius was not a man to bend to his will and consent to a reconciliation with his abhorred rival. In fact, the encounter of the two men caused the renewal of angry contentions and mutual recrimination. Constantine hesitated between the two, but seemed to incline towards Arius and Eusebius, and it is probable that there would have been a complete change of position, had not the sudden and mysterious death of Arius[1] deprived his party of its greatest support. The death of Arius seemed to make a deep impression on Constantine, who himself died a year afterwards, leaving the Church even more divided than it was before the Council of Nicæa, and lacerated by such fierce passions as to deprive it of all attraction to disinterested observers.[2] The divine and simple religion of the Gospel had become a field of furious and often bloody contentions concerning empty metaphysical subtleties.

Constantius, who succeeded his father in the empire of the East, seeing that the greater influence was on the side of the Arians, and being more free than his father, not having been compromised in the deliberation of the Council of Nicæa, did not hesitate to exile Athanasius from Alexandria, following the advice of Eusebius,

[1] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 62. [2] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 271, 15.

whom he had called from Nicomedia to the see of Constantinople. But the theology of the Emperor was dominated by political necessities. Now, while Constantius in the East upheld Arianism, Constans, the other son of Constantine, who governed in the West, unfurled the banner of Orthodoxy, and so great was his devotion to this cause, that he threatened to make war on his brother unless he immediately recalled Athanasius, who had appealed to him for protection.[1] Constantius, not wishing to add to the difficulties that already beset him, on account of his campaign against the King of Persia, the difficulties of an internal theological struggle with his brother, tempered his zeal for Arianism, and, in the year 346, replaced Athanasius in the see of Alexandria, and with repeated and courteous letters compelled him to pay a visit to his court, although the acute bishop had very little faith in the sincerity of the Emperor.[2]

After events proved how well the suspicions of Athanasius were founded. Constans having been killed by the rebel Magnentius, and his brother Constantius becoming the sole Emperor, without any obstacle or fear, he returned to his primitive ecclesiastical policy, immediately expelled Athanasius from his see of Alexandria, to which he had only just returned, and would even, in all probability, have had him murdered, if the bishop,

[1] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 88. [2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

advised of his danger, had not saved himself by a timely escape from the city. But Constantius still persisted in his persecution. In the year 355, he convened a solemn Council at Milan, and desired that it should pronounce a sentence of condemnation that would prevent Athanasius from ever returning to Alexandria. Against this sentence three Western bishops courageously resisted; they were Paulinus of Trèves, Dionysius of Alba, and Eusebius of Vercelli. The Council of Milan was dissolved, after having added fresh fuel to the flames, which had already reached frightful dimensions.

But the rivals of Athanasius were not sufficiently united, and discord soon broke out in their camp. The pure Arians, led by Aëtius—a restless and audacious personage of whom, later on, we shall hear more—were not contented with affirming the distinct personality of the Father and the Son, but insisted that they were also dissimilar in substance. The Origenist Arians, or Semi-Arians, as they called themselves, of whom Basil of Ancyra was the leader, while holding that the two Persons were substantially distinct, affirmed the equality of the two substances. Between these Semi-Arians and the Athanasians there was a great contention concerning an "i." While the Athanasians insisted that the Son was ὁμοούσιος with the Father, that is to say, that he had the same substance, the Semi-Arians interposed an "i," saying that the

Son was ὁμοιούσιος, that is, of a distinct substance but similar to that of the Father. These moderate Arians were evidently anxious to come to some sort of compromise with the Athanasians. This famous "i" which they introduced into the adjective invented at Nicæa, was their effort to defend themselves against the fearful peril of seeing disappear, together with the distinction of substance, that between the Persons—the hypostases, as they called them—which would have been a fall into Sabellian monarchianism. If they could have been assured of the distinction between the Persons, it is most probable that these parties would have been reconciled. But, before they could arrive at this point, they had to pass through a period of confused and ardent disputes. The Emperor Constantius, more and more enthusiastic for Arianism, would accept no compromise, and excluded with suspicion those formulas that, while preserving the duality and the subordination of the hypostases, admitted not the identity but the equality of the substance. The Court of Constantius was wholly Arian, and violently Arian, however much the bishops whose influence was paramount therein concealed their real opinions. In the "i" they found more of a snare than a defence. Rigorous Arianism was, however, no longer sustainable, as it was attacked in all directions. Constantius, in order to make a pretence of moderation, exiled Aëtius, the

leader of the Arians. The desire and necessity for peace became most evident. In the East and in the West, Council succeeded Council, formulas succeeded formulas, and the whole Christian world resounded with interminable discussions, in which the subtlety of the argument developed the sparks that kindled new discords, and it seemed impossible that it would ever come to an end. The bone of contention for the Arians was the word *ὀυσία*—substance—which was found in the formula of the Origenistic and moderate Arians. Before that word, the bishops who were around Constantius encompassing him with their intrigues — Valens, Ursacius, Germinius, Acacius — felt their mistrust much increased, and they began to bestir themselves. Basil of Ancyra, and his associates, who had invented the famous "i," were subjected to even more suspicion than the pure Athanasians. These courtier bishops tried to find a formula that would distinguish them from the violent Arians, who, with Aëtius, had officially fallen into discredit, but one that might at the same time assure them of victory over their abhorred rivals, and prevent the possible resurrection of the Nicene doctrine. By their influence and through their machinations, they founded a new party, the "homoical" party, which admitted that the Son was equal to the Father according to the will—*κατὰ τὴν βούλησιν*—but they refused most absolutely

to admit the possibility of an equality of substance. This party established itself for the first time at Sirmio, in the year 359, with a formula that generically affirmed that the Son was in all things—*κατὰ πάντα*—equal to the Father. But that *κατὰ πάντα*, which from its indetermination had no value, was later excluded by the influence of those tending to Arianism, in the final formula that issued from the tempestuous Synods of Rimini and Seleucia. The resemblance of the Son to the Father was only determined by the distinction contained in the following words—according to the Scriptures—put there as a talisman to prevent this form from ever being attacked.[1] Constantius in the year preceding his death, before starting for Constantinople, imposed this opportunistic formula on the Church, deceiving himself with the flattering idea of having settled a serious doctrinal dispute by means of a political compromise.

When Julian took in hand the reins of government, he found the Empire subjected to a peace imposed on a basis of opportunism. It was evident that this peace did not possess any stability, and Julian, in the interest of his own cause, precipitated its rupture. He, as we shall see later on, declared himself to be extraneous to all parties and theological disputes among the

[1] Socrat., *op. cit.*, p. 126. *ὁμοῖον λέγομεν υἱὸν τῷ πάτρι ὡς λέγουσιν αἱ θεῖαι γραφαὶ καὶ διδάσκουσι.*

Christians, and, therefore, permitted all the bishops exiled by Constantius to return to their sees, and it was exactly those bishops who formed the discontented element in each party. Julian's previsions proved true; the return of these pugnacious men on the theological stage rekindled the discords and disputes. But it did not have the consequence that he had anticipated, namely, the humiliation of detested Christianity. Athanasius returned to Alexandria, only to be expelled again by Julian, the sole act of manifest intolerance of which he was guilty; but his indomitable energy, and his innate disposition of agitator, immediately revivified and reorganised his party, and thus he placed his victorious opponents, the Arians, in a most difficult position. During the three years passed in exile, the old defender of Nicene Orthodoxy had participated in all the emotions of the struggle, and by a series of spirited writings, dogmatic, historical, apologetic, he kept alive the courage of his friends, and reminded his enemies that he was still living. In these writings of the old but not exhausted athlete, one could easily see the tendency to make peace with the defeated partisans of the ὁμοιουσία, of the similitude of the substance of the Father and the Son, and to lessen the difference that distinguished them from the partisans of the ὁμοουσία, the identity between the two substances. In the anticipated and possible accord between Orthodoxy and the

Origenistic faction of ancient Arianism, then in open hostility with the violent faction, he hoped to be able to gain a victory over the heresy triumphant in the court of Constantius and the official world.[1] Julian dead, the heroic bishop remained master of the field, and he gave unquestionable proofs of the nobility and magnanimity of his character by openly making advances towards conciliation. In the West the movement towards conciliation was promoted by two authors of great intellect—Hilarius, called the Athanasius of the West, and Marius Victorinus, the Neo-Platonic philosopher, of whom Augustine narrates the touching conversion.[2] In the East the movement had received great assistance from those three renowned personages of the Church, called the three Cappadocians—Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus, the most bitter of Julian's enemies. The Origenist similitude of the essence of the Father and Son became transformed into the Athanasian identity of essence, but, at the same time, the distinct Trinity of the Persons was solemnly proclaimed. Thus was founded the essential dogma of Christian metaphysics:—a single substance in three persons—*μία οὐσία ἐν τρίσιν ὑποστάσεσιν.*

With Theodosius this formula became the supreme law, not only of the Church, but also of

[1] Gummerus, *Die homousianische Partei*, 1900.
[2] August., *Confess.*, p. 8, 2 sq.

the State, and he threatened severe punishment to those who dared disobey it, and thus religious intolerance entered into the world and commenced its fatal reign. In the West, the Nicene Orthodoxy became diffused and easily took root, as, during the great disputes, the West had always been in favour of Athanasius. The only episode of importance was the contest between Ambrose and the Empress Regent, Justina, who had brought to Milan a lingering sympathy for Arianism, and sought to gather at her court the dispersed partisans of the defeated doctrine. But Ambrose, who had already developed a great spirit of intolerance in the State, and won over to triumphant Orthodoxy Gratian, the predecessor and half-brother of Valentinianus II., of whom Justina was the mother and guardian, unhesitatingly opposed his views to those of the Empress, and, being sure of the devotion of the people, obtained an easy victory. Arianism in the Roman world was extinct, and Orthodoxy was given an empire that was not disturbed even when Arianism reappeared on the scene, brought back by the Goths and the Longobards. The great theological drama whose elements were elaborated in the third century, and in which, at Nicæa, the State appeared with Constantine as the principal actor, was finished at the end of the fourth century. Ambrose ended the work that Athanasius had begun. Constantine desired to institute an Orthodox religion that would be an

instrument of State; Gratian and Theodosius made it a power to which the State served as an instrument. And human thought remained for ever imprisoned!

The victory of Nicene Orthodoxy allied with the Origenist "right" of Arianism, was an event of supreme importance, and determined the direction of Christianity through a long series of centuries. From this victory was created metaphysical, scientific, and dogmatic Christianity. If the doctrine of Paul of Samosata had triumphed, which was later that of pure Arianism, the simple doctrine that affirmed the existence of one God revealed by a man rendered divine because of his virtues, neither Augustine nor Thomas could ever have been possible. The simplicity of the conception, accessible and comprehensible to all, would have rendered the difficult and complicated dogmatic constructions unnecessary. But this doctrine, just because it was simple, could not satisfy the exigencies of the Græco-Roman mind, which was thirsting for metaphysical fantasies, and full of enthusiasm for the Platonic idealism that Plotinus, Porphyry, and the Neo-Platonics had rekindled in the world of thought. Origen was the first and true lawgiver of Christian metaphysics, which he constructed with the materials of Neo-Platonism. This metaphysic was a cosmology in which the ideas, under the form of divine hypostases, retained the same functions as they had in Plato's

philosophy. The Origenist cosmology was already in itself fantastic, complicated, and mysterious. But allied with Nicene Orthodoxy, it became still more difficult of comprehension, or, to express it more exactly, it became more irrational, because from the moment that Orthodoxy absolutely denied the subordination of the Logos to God, and affirmed the absolute unity of substance in the three Persons, at the same time insisting that they were distinct, it, as we have already said, intensified the mystery. From this came the creation of a religion, metaphysical, cosmological, and incomprehensible, constructed in all its parts by the great mind of Augustine, and imposed on the world as a dogma that could not be discussed, because the Church alone held its key. And henceforth the pure and divine inspiration of the Gospel was buried. The Church became the absolute master of human thought, in it alone was to be found the knowledge of truth, and, outside of this, there was nothing but error and damnation.

While in the world of theological thought and in the great debates of the Councils they ardently discussed the movement by which the Platonic ideas became ingrafted on the trunk of monotheism and created a dogmatic theology composed of incomprehensible theses, and, just because incomprehensible, imposed as articles of faith, Christianity, being diffused in all the strata of society, took the

place of paganism, and itself became paganised and idolatrous. And this could not be otherwise, because the intellectual conditions of humanity were not in the least changed, and therefore the Christians and pagans retained unaltered their conception of the deity and of his influence on the world. The saints and the martyrs took the place of the ancient divinities, their worship was modelled on the polytheistic rites, following principally the lines of the Mysteries. "Christianity"—says Müller[1]—"absorbed polytheism and took the place that it left vacant. The ruins of the ancient world were restored to life in the Church. The religious life of the people and the ecclesiastical ceremonies were the immediate continuation of the ancient life and ceremonies. There was no interruption. The aspect of the world remained the same. As in paganism, the religious sentiment of the people expressed itself in the regular and correct fulfilment of ritualistic duties, so the richer and more pompous the forms and ceremonies, the better the people were satisfied. The impression made by Christianity on the ancient world was only skin deep. Only a few seemed conscious that Christianity ought not to have abandoned itself to these tendencies; that the Christian is, above all, called to an intimate and immediate communion with God, and that this consciousness leads him to asceticism."

[1] Müller, *Kirchengeschichte*, p. 206.

Constantine, wishing to use the Church for his own purposes, to make it an instrument of power, gave it wealth and privileges, thus radically transforming it. It was no longer that religious brotherhood, composed of poor and humble people, often persecuted, without worldly influence, and content with the simple worship celebrated in obscure and private dwellings. Triumphant Christianity felt the need of imposing itself on the multitude by means of a luxury that attracts, and legends that strengthen the faith. In its evolution it profited by the spirit of the times; in contact with paganism it became worldly, and acquired many of its habits. Hence the pomp, the luxury, and the numerous hierarchies that were prevalent even in the fourth century. The liturgy was developed, festivals established, and, by means of the Councils, dogmas were formulated and defended with the greatest ardour. The life of the clergy and of the bishops no longer resembled that of the members of the primitive Church. It became corrupt and luxurious. Ammianus describes the bishops of the cities, who, "enriched by the gifts of the matrons, drove around the streets seated in coaches; splendidly attired, and lovers of abundant banquets, surpassing those of the Imperial table."[1]

The Church accepted the divisions of the Roman administration, adopted its ideas of hierarchy, and felt the desire to have a great number

[1] Amm. Marcell., *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 100.

of functionaries. Preoccupied with worldly cares, they forgot that love of the weak and the poor which was originally their great power of attraction. A simple religion, a supreme God, Creator of heaven and earth, a Redeemer of humanity, did not suffice for men accustomed to a multiplicity of sanctuaries and of gods. The Church was therefore led to recognise secondary and more human divinities, to whom it might address its prayers, and thus it felt obliged to institute a secondary worship by the side of that which it rendered to the supreme God. And from this arose the worship of the saints.

Ancient religion, with its numerous divinities, continued to live under the cover of this cult. The saint gathered around him the same adorers who previously had directed their prayers to the ancient pagan divinities. The saints substituted these divinities in their various functions. Like Mercury, they favoured enterprises, protected property; like Æsculapius, they restored health. The worship of the saints ended by becoming the true and only religion of the people, to whom the dogmas remained unknown. And it was by this worship that Christianity was able to take the place of paganism, whose forms it had adopted. In all the exterior religious manifestations paganism triumphed. There was not the slightest struggle between paganism and Christianity as to the greater or less prevalence of superstition and

ceremonial; the former had quietly introduced itself into the latter, making continued progress as the faithful increased, and, at the end of the conquest, they found that the Church, without being conscious of it, was transformed, and that its external worship was nothing else than the restoration of the ancient worship.[1]

The paganising of Christianity which took place in its dogmas and worship was also evident in its customs, as soon as Christianity became the dominant and recognised religion, and succeeded in conquering the masses. The tenacity with which they held to their treasures, and the desire for the pleasures of this world, was, by no means, weakened by conversion to Christianity. As far as morality was concerned, there was no difference between Christian and pagan. We might almost say that paganism was partly purified by unburdening on Christianity some of its most corrupt elements. And it was quite natural that this should happen. Under the Christian emperors Christianity was necessary to achieve success in life. To remain pagan it required great virtue and strong convictions. The spectacle offered by the Court, and by Constantine's family—that of Constantius, for example—which was dominated by intrigues, under the absolute sway of eunuchs, noted for the perpetration of

[1] Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 199.—Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, vol. ii. p. 413.—Hatch, *Griechentum und Christentum.*—Marignan, *La Foi Chrétienne.*

Neronian murders, was a proof of the moral shipwreck that Christianity had encountered when, from being a religion of persecuted humanity, it became the recognised religion of State. As long as Christianity was obliged to use all the strength of this minority in resisting persecution, it was a powerful moral force with men, and developed in them sentiments of heroic virtue. But Christianity, when victorious, rested quietly in security and peace, leaving man free to return to the indulgence of his passions and devote to evil all the energies that were no longer engaged in the supreme combat. So it happened that the world and man, notwithstanding that they became Christian, were no better than they had been before. And, furthermore, to render worse the condition of men and things, an entirely new phenomenon had been introduced, that of theological parties and disputations. Metaphysics in the ancient world was a matter of opinion. But Hellenised Christianity made of metaphysics an undisputable dogma. From this sprang doctrinal intolerance, because faith in dogma became the condition of salvation, and, as each party pretended to possess the absolute truth, they felt it, not only their right, but also their duty, to combat all errors in the other sects, not alone with reason, but with violence. The spectacle of theological discord was so scandalous that Ammianus Marcellinus, as we have seen, did

not hesitate to affirm that the Christians lacerated each other with the ferocity of wild beasts.

But the innate essence of Christianity possessed such great force, and responded so efficaciously to the absolute exigencies of the human soul that a reaction was inevitable against its abasement to the conditions of ordinary life and the world. This reaction took form and substance in monachism. Asceticism, that is to say, the renunciation of the world in order to isolate oneself and rise through ideal contemplation, was, by no means, unknown to the ancient world. But the Christian innovation was the constitution of a society of monks who, among themselves, realised the Christian ideal in all its purity. Thus there came to be two Christianities: the Christianity that was of the world, and that was necessarily corrupted and abased to the level of those who practised it, and a Christianity that, separating itself from the world, in the organised solitude of convents, kept alive the ideal aspirations and virtues of which the Gospel was the divine law. Monachism, like everything human in the world, went astray from its ideal purity, and, in order to harmonise with mundane exigencies, also became an instrument of passions and worldly interests. But, originally, it represented a salutary reaction that saved Christianity, because it kept alive the power of its influence, when the

attraction that came from its heroism in persecution had become extinguished. The demands in the life of the citizen, domestic and civil, lowered Christianity to the level of the paganism to which it had succeeded. Monachism created an organisation in which these necessities disappeared, and, in this manner, sustained the high ideals of Christianity. We may judge from the celebrated narration of Pontitianus in the *Confessions* of Augustine,[1] the impression and marvellous influence that the monachal example exercised at the end of the fourth century, in promoting conversion to Christianity.

The monastic movement found support and favour in Athanasius and the Orthodox party, while Arianism regarded it with antipathy and suspicion. And this is one of the reasons why Athanasius gained the final victory. Arianism represented rationalism, but, at the same time, the sterility of Christianity. Mystic ideality and moral sentiment were completely lost through it. Christianity was being adapted, without restraint and without salutary reaction, to the necessities of social life and worldly interest. The attitude of Orthodoxy was different. Ambrose, it is true, urged Gratian and Theodosius towards intolerance, but he did not hesitate to confront the violent and all-powerful Theodosius, and demand of him an acknowledgment of his crimes. The Arian and

[1] August., *op. cit.*, Book viii.

Semi-Arian bishops instead, who surrounded Constantine, and later Constantius, sought by indulging the Imperial faults to gain influence and favour. In this the Athanasian party preserved, in a higher degree than their rivals, the sentiment of the moral essence of Christianity, and favoured monachism as a protest against invading worldliness. It is because of this that we find, in this period of theological strife, the noblest and most attractive figures in the ranks of Nicene Orthodoxy.

Monachism, which had its beginnings in Egypt, found the ground ready prepared through the asceticism practised by the followers of Isis and Serapis, and might have become a danger to the Church, if its protest had developed into open rebellion. But victorious Orthodoxy, exercising over it a wise and moderating influence, restrained it within the limits of a religious affirmation that kept alive and visible the flame of Christian ideals. However, if monachism has undoubtedly assisted in saving the Christian ideal, it has also helped to make the Church more worldly-minded, because it has established a clear and precise division between those who practised, in all their purity, the principles of Christianity, and those who adapted them to their worldly interests. This adaptation became to a certain point legitimised by the existence, in the bosom of the Church, of an organisation that assumed the office of fulfilling, in

its perfection, the law of Christ, and, therefore, seemed tacitly to authorise those not belonging to it to transgress this law.

The very rapid corruption of Christianity, after it was victorious and was constituted a recognised authority, is one of the most suggestive and truly instructive facts presented in the history of humanity. Christianity had introduced a principle entirely new and sublime, that of the equality of men, from which naturally followed the law of love and respect for one another—a duty and principle that had received their supreme sanction in the ignominious death of a God who had sacrificed himself for the salvation of humanity. This principle, which was the negation of the basis on which ancient society was founded, had attracted the innumerable masses of the oppressed and unhappy, and had given to that society a shock which it was unable to resist. But Christianity, as later demonstrated, was powerless to remodel a new society on this principle. The Christian society was morally no better than the pagan society, of which it had undermined all the organisms, both political and civil. Slavery had been somewhat moderated,[1] but the Church, when it became powerful, took good care not to abolish it. This abolition did not come through victorious Christianity, but through the invasion of the barbarians, whereby a new servi-

[1] Allard, *Julien l'Apostat*, vol. i. p. 329.

tude, that of the glebe, took the place of personal servitude.[1]

The inability of victorious Christianity to transform the world and society with the aid of those principles which were truly the foundations of this doctrine, demonstrates that human progress in the direction of civilisation must be advanced by other influences than that of preaching and purely moral instruction. What this influence may be we will try to discover at the end of this volume. Now we will simply endeavour to recreate the *milieu* in which Julian's attempt took place. We have seen how Christianity, by appropriating philosophical thought, intensified it to such an extent as to kindle around it the strongest passions, and make it the paramount question, by substituting, in the foundation of the faith, dogma for sentiment. But this fervour for metaphysical thought, this passion for transcendental explanations, was not peculiar to Christianity, for it responded to a special condition of the human mind in a determined moment of its evolution ; so that we also find it in the enemy's camp, where it manifested itself in a system parallel to Christian dogmatics, in a system that permitted the transformation of ancient polytheism into a religion which, with its metaphysical symbolism, deceived itself, and pretended to be able to combat and conquer Christianity. Of this religious philosophy

[1] Negri, *Meditazioni Vagabonde*, p. 439.

Julian was the most fervent disciple. In this he found reasons, inspirations, and weapons against the influence of Christ. Therefore, before relating the events of this war, we will consider for an instant the doctrine with which the future Apostate was secretly nourished, while around him resounded the clamour of the disputes by which the new-born Church was being rent asunder.

NEO-PLATONISM

The diffusion of Christianity, its recognition as the religion of the State, its progressive adaptation to all the exigencies and conditions of the times, and, finally, the great internal struggles by which it was rent, while elaborating a body of doctrines, affirmed as dogmatic orthodoxy, — these are the elements which compose the picture of Græco-Roman society throughout the course of the fourth century. This society, however, did not allow itself to be transformed without some resistance, and attempted to oppose to the metaphysical and religious constructions of Christianity a system that, substituting naturalistic and rational polytheism—or, at least, infusing in its forms a new spirit—yet retained the ancient structure of traditions, thought, and social organisation. This system was Neo-Platonism. Here, again, we note, as we have already remarked above, that Neo-Platonism, at whose source Origen had been nourished, by placing God in the supernatural, and declaring that mysticism was the only means by which man could unite himself to a God incomprehensible just because he is supernatural, was the mould from which Christian theology

issued. The Arians were not Neo-Platonists ; they regarded with mistrust and suspicion the overgrowth of metaphysical ideas around the trunk of Christianity, and made supreme efforts to save monotheism, which was evidently compromised. But Orthodoxy, which amalgamated with temperate Origenism, terminated in St. Augustine, having passed through Athanasius, Basil, Hilary, and the two Gregories, was nothing less than pure Neo-Platonism. Between Christian Neo-Platonism and Hellenic Neo-Platonism, there was, however, an essential difference. The first presented a new God, possessed of a perfect historical objectivity and an unequalled power of attraction ; the second retained the ancient divinities, but deprived them of all personality, and reduced them to the condition of mere symbols. It was clear that, in this respect, the advantage was all on the side of Christianity. Now, Julian's attempt awakens great interest, just because he endeavoured to oppose to Christianity the ancient gods of the Hellenic Olympus, on the basis of a philosophy which was, in fact, essentially identical with that of Christianity. Julian wished to accomplish in polytheism that which Christianity had already achieved, namely, to unite philosophy with religion, and create a theology, a polytheistic body of dogma which, organised into an ecclesiastical hierarchy, would be able to rival Christianity in its wealth of cosmological and mystical doctrine, and, at the same time, preserve the ancient gods,

the ancient customs and traditions, thereby saving Hellenic civilisation—Hellenism, as he called it—from the destruction with which it was threatened by Christianity.

The appearance of Neo-Platonism, and the great influence it exercised over the human mind, is a phenomenon of supreme importance in the evolution of thought and of civilisation. Neo-Platonism represented the complete failure of Platonic and Aristotelic rationalism, and of all the schools that succeeded the two great organisers of ancient philosophy. This was based on the conception of the absolute distinction between matter and mind, the sensible and the intelligible, and, reasoning on the idea, the spirit, the intelligible, strove ideally to reconstruct the world, with a complete faith in abstract reason, in the solidity of ideal creations, built up with the logical material taken from the mine of thought, but not subjected to the crucible of experience and observation. The result of this prodigious undertaking could only be the formation of a rational mirage, which disappeared when the observer changed his point of view, so that humanity, after a long series of centuries, felt the necessity of something better fitted to calm its anxieties and aspirations. Thus Neo-Platonism appeared in the anarchy of systems which developed either into a scepticism without issue, or a heroic but hopeless resignation. It borrowed from Plato the spirit, the

idea, God, but did not see in it an essentially rational principle, with which to proceed in the research of truth, but affirmed it as a principle, *par excellence* super-rational and supernatural, in which the truth was irremissibly concealed.

For Neo-Platonism, rational cognisance is only an intermediate grade between the perception of the senses and the intuition of the supernatural. The supreme idea is never found in that which constitutes the real and cognoscible contents of the thought, but in that which is its invisible basis, its inscrutable depth. The transcendental is considered as the supreme reality. The intelligible forms are only the transitory means by which the energy of the Being, transcendental and formless, expands in the world. This affirmation of the super-rational and supernatural as the origin and reason of the world, entailed the necessary consequence that man, not being able to approach it by means of reason, was constrained to resort to fantasy, which, gradually, led him into mysticism and superstition, and, as in human life, the union with God is with difficulty attained by the unaided efforts of the soul, the external assistance of positive religion was found necessary. Therefore, Neo-Platonism became an essentially religious philosophy, especially during its development in the fourth century; a philosophy that venerated and tried to keep alive all the ancient religions, reanimating them, however, with symbolical interpretations of their naturalistic

myths. Neo-Platonism, however, did not realise that this renovation was not the restoration, but rather the ruin of, the ancient religions, and forced them to an office unfitted to their nature; they were really old vessels, and unable to resist the pressure of the new wine poured into them. Finally, Neo-Platonism, in the fourth century, was a Christianity without Christ—a Christianity that did not possess a real and historical divinity, and substituted for it the empty phantoms of thoroughly exhausted divinities, which only then existed as foolish puppets or incomprehensible symbols.

Here, however, we would like to make an observation that will be more clearly understood in the course of this study, namely, that Christianity vanquished Neo-Platonism, not alone by reason of its virtues, but also by that of its vices. In fact, Christianity was, from its beginning, systematically constituted, and formed an hierarchical organisation. It was the existence of this hierarchy that induced Constantine to make himself an ally of the Christian Church, which, by this alliance, received its recognition, becoming one of the constitutive elements of the complicated and rotten organisation of the Romano-Byzantine Empire. But Christianity necessarily paid for its victory by becoming infected with all the evils that afflicted the worldly power which it had embraced, and we have already seen how the ideal of Christian morality took refuge in convents and in the cells of ascetics. Neo-

Platonism, which never learnt how to organise itself, remained as an opinion, an aspiration, a personal doctrine, and did not offer to the empire either strength or new resources, and the empire naturally disdained it. Julian's attempt to associate Neo-Platonism in the empire, as his uncle Constantine had associated Christianity, was misunderstood, and considered by some to be the harmless fancy of an idealist; by others, as the crime of an accursed Apostate. But the most curious point in this history is, that Neo-Platonism, having remained wrapt in the solitude of its mysteries and meditations, had preserved an appearance of ideality that Christianity, in contact with the world, had necessarily lost. Therefore, Julian's attempt to restore polytheism in opposition to Christianity, although it may appear strange, possessed the signification of a moral restoration. This was one, and certainly not the least important, reason of its miserable failure. The dissensions between Julian and the Antiochians, so bitterly narrated in the *Misopogon*, arose precisely from the fact that the Neo-Platonic and austere Emperor endeavoured to correct and reform the Christian and corrupt city. And the Antiochians had no inclination to follow the exhortations of the Imperial moralist. They had found much more to their taste the Christian Constantius, with his crowd of eunuchs, parasites, and buffoons, his *fêtes* and theatres, than the Hellenic Julian, who divided

his time between the affairs of State and his books, and wrapped himself up in a sort of philosophical asceticism.

The failure of religious Neo-Platonism, so tragically verified at the death of Julian, did not lead, as a consequence, to its philosophical failure, so that Neo-Platonism had its revenge in Orthodox theology. Its symbolical gods have fallen before the Christian God, but dogmatic Christianity is imbued with its doctrines, and derives from them its metaphysics; and this doctrine, with its offshoots, has stifled the divine tree of Evangelical Christianity, and prevented it from bearing its natural fruits.

Let us now thoroughly investigate the essential nature of this Neo-Platonic philosophy which was the vital nutriment of the Imperial Apostate.

The decadence of the ancient world, the dissolution of its moral and religious bases, the philosophical scepticism produced by the succession of systems, which, lacking all foundation of truth, proved mutually destructive,—all these causes, while favouring the diffusion of Christianity, at the same time promoted a parallel movement in Greek thought towards a proximate and ecstatic perception of divinity, which, by reviving ancient polytheism and symbolising it, responded to the exigencies and moral aspirations which agitated and tormented the human soul. From this move-

ment of thought and spirit there issued, in the first half of the third century, Neo-Platonism, which, in the name and with the elements borrowed from Plato, created a new philosophical system that assumed the supernatural as the principle of the universe and of nature, and, having dethroned reason, forced it to abdicate its rights. The history of Neo-Platonism is divided into three periods: the first, the foundation of the system, and its theoretical development through the efforts of Plotinus, extends from the year 200 to 270; the second period, and the most interesting for our study, is that of its practical elaboration and application to the renewal of polytheism, from 270 to 400, for which successively laboured Porphyry, Iamblichus, and his disciples, among whom was Julian; the third period, from 400 to 529, is that of the school of Athens, in which, through the especial work of Proclus, Neo-Platonism abandoned its mystical aspect and became a didactic system that had a great historical importance, because it was under this form that Greek philosophy, exiled from Athens by a decree of Justinian, passed to the East, where afterwards it was fostered and preserved by the Arabs, who transmitted it to mediæval Scholasticism.

The founder of Neo-Platonism was Ammonius Saccas of Alexandria, a Christian re-converted to paganism. He has left no writings, but his great merit is proved by his illustrious pupils, such as the

Christian Origen,[1] and Plotinus, who affirms that he found truth and peace in the upright teachings of his great master. But, if Ammonius was the creator of Neo-Platonism, Plotinus was its revealer, as we may see in his numerous writings that have come to us, arranged and published by his pupil, Porphyry.

The system of Plotinus is directed towards uplifting the human soul from the degradation into which it had fallen through its alienation from the principle to which it owes its origin. The inspiration of his philosophy is in its desire for a perfect union with the divinity, in the unceasing effort to issue from the finite and limited. Plotinus wishes to point out the way by which man can reunite himself to God, to describe the process through which the universe, derived from supreme unity, could return to it, and be reintegrated in it.

Plotinus asserts the absolute unity of the First Cause. Of this First Cause, which is essentially Being, we only know that it is infinite, and beyond

[1] This information is given by Porphyry, in a fragment of his "Treatise against the Christians," reproduced by Eusebius (Book vi. chap. 19). The latter partly refutes the assertions of Porphyry, and maintains that Ammonius always remained Christian. The modern critics (Zeller, 3, 450, 459) prove that the refutation of Eusebius is erroneous, but, at the same time, they cast a doubt on the relation that existed between Origen and Ammonius, and think it possible that the Christian Origen is mistaken for another Origen, who was also a pupil of Ammonius. But to us, the testimony of Porphyry is very strong, because he was almost contemporaneous with these personages, and had his information direct from Plotinus, who had studied in the school of Ammonius.

all possible conception, so that we may say of it what it is not, but not what it is. As an active power, it generates, albeit remaining always equal to itself, whilst the creative current emanates from it. The multiple derives from the unit by a dynamic process of transmission of force. Primordial Being is the matrix from which all comes, and the end towards which all tends. But, if Being is present in all the universe, the universe constitutes a linear series of manifestations, upon which its action gradually weakens in proportion to the greatness of the distance from its origin, and finishes by extinguishing itself in non-existence.

In this series, the first place is occupied by thought, by reason, which is, after all, nothing else but the Philonian and Christian Logos. Generated thought, in the moment of issuing from the unity of Being, turns towards it and reflects it; it forms a contemplator and a contemplated, a thinker and a thought, a cognisant and a cognoscible, the *νοῦς* and the *κόσμος νοητός*.

Between the idea and the world of phenomena, Plotinus placed the spirit, which, while moved and illuminated by the idea, is also in contact with the corporeal world it has generated. The spirit is, at the same time, a unit and a multiple: a unit, because it is the breath that animates the entire universe; a multiple, because it collects within itself all the partial souls, which become good or

evil, in proportion as they experience the desire to reunite and reintegrate themselves in the divine unity.

Plotinus distinguishes the phenomenal world from the supernatural world, because, in opposition to the latter, it is multiple, inharmonious, and contradictory—a caricature of the true reality. Matter is absolutely nothing, and can only be conceived when abstracted from all form and determination; it is the negation of ideas, which are the only reality; it is the origin of evil, the *πρῶτον κακόν*. But Plotinus, truly pantheistic, does not arrive at the Gnostic and pessimistic conception of the creation of evil by a secondary God—an Ahriman—in opposition to the supreme God. For him, the world is perfect, such as it is, and represents a necessary evolution. Evil must exist, so that good may exist; matter must exist, so that the soul, descending from ideal unity, may feel the aspiration of returning to it, and close, in this way, the cycle of existence.

But how is it ever possible for the soul to return to the divine unity from which it is descended? For this, virtue is indispensable; it purifies the soul, and leads it back to ideas. But, to be truly reunited to God, it is not sufficient that man be without sin. This becomes possible in the ecstatic exaltation of the pure man. Thought, in itself, is incapable of this exaltation, because the thought

only leads to the idea. The thought is only a preparation for the union with God. The soul can only become conscious of, and attain to, the supreme Being, when in a condition of absolute passivity and repose. The soul, therefore, begins by contemplating the multiplicity and harmony of things, then retires within itself, and arrives at the world of ideas; finally, with a supreme effort, it frees itself from all bonds, and finds itself face to face with God, the fountain of life, the principle of Being, the origin of good. At this point, it enjoys supreme felicity. But it can only remain thus for an instant. This contemplation will not be uninterrupted until it is liberated from the body.

Plotinus, as an enthusiastic mystic, often experienced this exaltation, which placed him in the immediate presence of God. His disciple, Porphyry, in his life of the master, narrates as follows: "To this inspired man, who often elevated himself towards that God who is the highest and beyond comprehension, God appeared, although having no form and being invisible, because residing in the thought and the thinker. He had only one aim in life, to approach and unite himself to God, who is above all. This aim he attained four times while I was with him, and without external assistance, but as if by some inexpressible force."[1] On the point of death, "he said he was struggling to unite the divine that is within us,

[1] *Plotini Vita*, § 23.

with the divine that is in the universe, and breathed his last."[1]

If it were not for the pantheistic ring of these last words, perhaps the most beautiful and profound ever pronounced by a dying man, the mystic enthusiasm of Plotinus might be that of an Augustine, and the vision of the Neo-Platonic philosopher has a great similarity to the state of ecstasy in which the greatest theologian of Orthodoxy, on one occasion, found himself suddenly elevated into the presence of God, while contemplating the sea and sky from the window of his house at Ostia.

The philosophy of Plotinus has, therefore, an essentially religious character. In all parts it is permeated with the idea of God and the aspiration to be united with him. The points of contact with Christianity are most evident, as, in certain respects, they have an identity of concepts and tendencies, which is understood, primarily from the direction taken by the philosophical thought of the time, and from the circumstance that Origen and Plotinus—the two founders of Christian and Neo-Platonic metaphysics—were pupils of the same master, Ammonius Saccas. Still, notwithstanding their great resemblance, there existed between the two systems—we may say, between the two religions—a profound antipathy, arising from the

[1] *φήσας πειρᾶσθαι τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν θεῖον ἀνάγειν πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῷ παντὶ θεῖον, ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα.*

fact that while Neo-Platonism was the fruit of the true Hellenic tree, Christianity was the fruit of that tree on which was grafted Hebraic monotheism. Neo-Platonism was profoundly pantheistic. The eternal process of evolution that, from the unity of the Being, descended to the multiplicity of the phenomena, to return again to the unity,—this process that for Plotinus represented the origin and successive annulment of evil, excludes the conception of a preordained creation and a conscient rule of the world, excludes the responsibility of the existence of evil attributed to human liberty, excludes the necessity of a process of redemption, and the end of the world. Christianity, with its exigencies and its promises, appeared to the Neo-Platonists as an anti-philosophical negation of the eternal necessity of the order and harmony of the universe; as an unreasonable denial of all that was good and beautiful, as represented by the great men of the past; as a pessimistic affirmation that bore, within itself, the destruction of universal order. Christianity dramatised the history of the world in the tragical process of a creation, transgression, and redemption. To the Neo-Platonics that story appeared a hymn of glory to the divine necessity, unalterable, perfect in the harmony of the whole. Neo-Platonic pantheism rose in arms against the monotheistic individualism of Christianity. Seeing God everywhere, it found, in polytheism and mythology, symbols capable of giving form to the various manifestations of divinity.

And, notwithstanding that Plotinus was far removed from the superstitious extravagance of his successors, he also united magic and divination with the conception and sentiment of the continual presence of the Divinity. Plotinus wished to revive the ancient cults, making them symbols of a thought and a philosophical and religious aspiration. Christianity announced a precise monotheism, and a God with a well-defined historical personality, and then it strove to endow the one and the other with the same philosophical conceptions as formed the foundation of Neo-Platonic thought. There was, therefore, between the two systems, equality in the essence of thought, and difference in the manner of being affected by religion, and of giving form to thought in religious manifestations. And precisely in this difference lay the strength of Christianity, which presented to mankind thirsting for the divine, specified and precise images, before which the vague and oscillating symbols of Neo-Platonism disappeared like the mist.

Among the disciples and successors of Plotinus there was manifested the most decided tendency to promote, in Neo-Platonism, a renewal and restoration of the ancient religions, in opposition to Christianity. The first among these disciples was Porphyry, who collected and published the works of the master. He possessed a genial and lucid intelligence, without, however, having any claim to

the speculative depth of Plotinus, and was the true initiator of the revival of polytheism. To him all religions represented the effort of the human soul to escape from the finite, and reunite itself with God. However, as this reunion is only to be attained by passing through three stages, first in the spirit, then in the idea, and finally in the supreme Being, polytheism, by the variety of its symbols, thus found the means of efficaciously representing this gradual process. Although criticising the myths and the irrational and ignorant cults, and affirming that the supreme God should be worshipped in silence and with pure thoughts, Porphyry wished to keep alive all the ancient religions, resolute in his conception that religion being a symbolical manifestation and of a necessarily relative truth, every one has not only the right but the duty of honouring the Divinity, according to the customs of his own country. Porphyry, therefore, recognised the rights of all national religions, of the barbaric as well as the Hellenic, and also the Hebraic, considered simply, as the religion of a given nationality. But he abhorred the Christian exclusiveness that, in the name of absolute truth, endeavoured to overthrow all forms of worship not its own, and destroy all the traditions of Hellenic philosophy and culture. Porphyry even composed against Christianity a treatise, which was lost, in order to prove the lack of foundation of its pretended historical basis, and the slight credibility

of its documents. He considered Christ as a pious man whose teachings had been completely misunderstood and corrupted by his disciples, who made a divinity of him.

Porphyry took the first steps in the direction that transformed Neo-Platonism from a pure speculation into a positive religion, but the clear rationalism by which he was guided arrested him at the point beyond which religion became superstition and magic. In fact, St. Augustine said of him: "Porphyrius quamdam quasi purgationem animæ per theurgiam, cunctanter tamen et pudibunda, quodam modo, disputatione, promittit. Reversionem vero ad Deum hanc artem portare cuiquam negat, ut videas eum inter vitium sacrilegæ curiositatis et philosophiæ professionem, sententiis alternantibus, fluctuare." His successors, first among whom Iamblichus, and after him Ædesius, Chrysantius, Maximus, and finally Julian, went beyond the master. With the pantheistic formulas of Neo-Platonism, and with its mystical aspirations, they dared to compose, and oppose to Christianity, a symbolical religion entirely founded on the most irrational and repugnant superstition. Julian wished to make this new polytheism a religion of State. As we shall see, there existed between the moral and intellectual intentions of Julian and the religion that he practised a singular, and at the same time, interesting contradiction. This contradiction explains the futility of the young Emperor's attempt,

and how it necessarily ended in the definite victory of Christianity.

To obtain a precise idea of the motives that inspired Julian in this attempt, it is necessary to become acquainted with the little Neo-Platonic group, which met together at Nicomedia, and the neighbouring cities. Julian, as we already know, was numbered among them, during the years of his sojourn in Nicomedia, and here he found the definite consecration of the tendencies with which he had been inoculated by his first teacher, Mardonius. The information, given by Eunapius, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, although slight and lacking all critical judgment, succeeds in giving us a living picture of this small and curious world.

The most important personage—the founder, we should say, of Neo-Platonism—transformed in a theurgical religion, was Iamblichus, a pupil of Anatolius and Porphyry. He lived in the time of Constantine, and, in his old age, was known by Julian, if we can trust the authenticity of the letters written to him by the latter, which are still preserved. From the short biography written by Eunapius,[1] it appears that Iamblichus was really considered as a magician, a worker of miracles, in truth most absurd, and that in this consisted his greatest value. But the intelligence of Eunapius is of an inferior order, and impoverishes even that which he would illustrate.

[1] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 10–19.

Some of Iamblichus' writings are still preserved, and also many testimonies, that enable us to judge him more in accordance with the truth, and justly to appreciate the importance of his philosophical productions.[1] Certainly, in him there seems more developed the theologian, who endeavours to give a speculative foundation to religion and its rites, than the philosopher, who devotes himself to the logic of doctrinal reasoning. Porphyry had already shown a tendency to regard philosophy from its fantastic and religious aspect, but Iamblichus devoted himself with greater insistence to this point of view. If Porphyry, in order to succeed in his aims, more religious than philosophical, considered the aid of the gods necessary, so much more was Iamblichus obliged to recur to it, being almost devoid of faith in human strength. The clear and simple categories of the Plotinic system were not sufficient for Iamblichus. His philosophy became terribly complicated and confused by the multiplication of the hypostases of the divine unity. In his fantastic conception, every rational moment assumes a concrete form in a distinct hypostasis. It seemed to Iamblichus that the best way of representing the divinity was to multiply and subdivide it as much as possible, and present, under separate forms, all the functions that characterise its essence

[1] Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, vol. iii. p. 678.—Ritter and Preller, *Historia philosophiæ græcæ*, p. 546.

and its relations with the finite. This minute division of the ideal unity, this successive abasement of the unit to the multiple, is the distinguishing feature between the Neo-Platonism of Iamblichus and that of Plotinus. The historical importance of the doctrine of Iamblichus lies in the fact that the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus, which was an ideal affirmation of the transcendent and supernatural, became a mystical theology that boldly assumed the position of a positive religion.

In the group of pupils and successors of Iamblichus, Ædesius seems to have been the most conspicuous. He was intended, by his father, for commerce, and sent to Greece to make practical studies. But he returned a philosopher, to the great surprise and indignation of his father. The young man, however, managed to obtain his pardon, and permission to go and study under Iamblichus, and perfect himself in his philosophical doctrines. When the school of Iamblichus was dispersed, Ædesius, following the directions of a miraculous presage, retired to the solitude of pastoral life.[1] But the youths who aspired to be instructed by him went and disturbed him in his retirement, not willing that so much wisdom should be wasted on the crags and forests, and they forced him to return to human intercourse. Ædesius consented, much against his will, and, going into Asia, established himself at Pergamos, and opened a

[1] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 27.

school whose fame, according to the credulous and enthusiastic Eunapius, reached to the heavens.

The most noted personages of that school were Maximus, Chrysantius, Eusebius, and Priscus. The first-named, Maximus, according to Eunapius, who had met him, when a youth, Maximus being then advanced in years, produced a most powerful impression on all who saw him, by the beauty of his face, the brilliancy of his eyes, the harmony of his voice, and his flow of words. Ambitious and restless, his agitated life had a tragic ending. He exercised a most powerful influence over Julian, and, with Mardonius, was responsible for the religious and philosophical predilections of this Prince. Maximus was wholly inflamed with the fervour of magic ritualism, and was one of the most efficient co-operators in transforming Neo-Platonism into a theurgical religion. He was a sort of saint, possessing the power of working miracles. It is interesting, and, above all, instructive as an indication of the *milieu*, to study the contrast that existed between Maximus and Eusebius. The latter attempted to rationalise Neo-Platonism, and experienced a lively antipathy to the magical and theurgical superstition into which the philosophy had degenerated, losing its speculative character. But he feared Maximus. We read in Eunapius that, when Maximus was present, Eusebius avoided displaying the acuteness of his logic, which was full of artifice and involved

dialectic. But when Maximus was absent, he shone like a star when the sun has disappeared.[1] The contrast between Eusebius and Maximus appears most vividly in the singular and symptomatic episode of the relations between Eusebius and Julian. The young Prince, thirsting for knowledge, came to Pergamos, attracted by the fame of Ædesius, and wished to be instructed by him. But Ædesius was, and felt himself, old. "I would that I could be thy master"—he said—"but the body no longer responds to the commands of the mind. I counsel thee to address thyself to my pupils. They will be able to give thee thy fill of every science and doctrine.[2] I would that Maximus were here, but he has gone to Ephesus, and Priscus has left for Greece. Eusebius, however, and Chrysantius remain, and listening to them, thou wilt not regret that I am old." Julian naturally follows his counsels. But he becomes aware of something obscure and disquieting in his relationship with these two masters. In fact, Chrysantius, who was an admirer and follower of Maximus, although not completely in accord with the doctrines of Eusebius, would not compromise himself by contradicting him. Eusebius, one day, after having instructed Julian in the interpretation of the ancient philosophers, declared to him that the truth was all there, and that magic and incantations,

[1] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 49.

[2] Eunap., *op. cit.*, *loco citato.* *ἐκεῖθεν ῥύδην ἐμφοροῦ σοφίας ἁπάσης καὶ μαθημάτων.*

which deluded the senses, were the manipulations of wizards who deceived by means of material aid. Julian, becoming suspicious, and not having thoroughly understood the significance and the reason of this warning with which Eusebius had closed his explanations, took Chrysantius aside. "O dear Chrysantius"—he said—"thou who knowest the truth, what does Eusebius mean by this peroration to his explanations?" But Chrysantius, who was above all a prudent man, and did not wish to make enemies, shut himself up in a profound reserve. "It would be better"—he replied—"to ask it of Eusebius himself." And Eusebius, directly interrogated by Julian, to make him understand what he meant by magic, related the following episode. "Maximus, becoming, by force of his character and intelligence, a despiser of our demonstrations, and falling into a species of mania, one day, at an early hour of the morning, gathered us together in the Temple of Diana, and surrounded himself with many witnesses. When we were assembled, after having inclined ourselves before the goddess. 'Be seated'—he said—'dearest companions, observe what is about to happen, and let it convince you how far I am above all of you.' We sat down, and Maximus burnt a grain of incense, and chanted, in an undertone, a certain hymn, when, behold, the statue began to smile, and then to laugh aloud. We uttered cries of amazement, but no one had moved or spoken, because,

suddenly, the lamps which the goddess held in her two hands became ignited, and the flame shot up before we could utter a word. We went away overcome, for the moment, by this wondrous spectacle. But thou shouldst not admire it, even as I did not admire it, but rather consider how much greater than this is purification by means of reason." [1] These last words of Eusebius reveal a singularly acute intelligence, one of those fearless rationalists, always rare—rarer still in antiquity, when positive science did not exist—who in confronting miracles refused to believe in the evidence of the senses. Julian, however, was altogether another sort of man, and his actions towards Eusebius are the most valuable proofs that we possess concerning the tendencies of his mind. In fact, Eusebius had scarcely ceased speaking when Julian exclaimed—"Adieu, devote thyself wholly to thy books; as for me, thou hast pointed out to me that which I sought"—and embracing Chrysantius, he left for Ephesus, in search of Maximus, and having found him, attached himself to this new master, and devoted himself with great tenacity to his doctrine. Maximus, evidently a man who was able to make use of all occasions to further his own purposes, was only too pleased to have as a pupil a Constantinian prince, persecuted, it is true, but, nevertheless, on the steps of the throne, and he applied himself with ardour to instruct him, and ingratiate

[1] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 50.

himself in his affections, and not being able alone to satisfy the insatiable curiosity of the youth, he called his friend Chrysantius to assist him, and, between the two, they made Julian that mystic enthusiast in whom religion and philosophy were confused with the most credulous superstition. On becoming Emperor, Julian called Maximus and Chrysantius to Constantinople. Maximus came immediately, and received extraordinary demonstrations of respect from Julian. But Chrysantius, loving a quiet life, and possessing more foresight than Maximus, because less ambitious, would not allow himself to be persuaded, notwithstanding the urgent demands sent by Julian, who even tried to enlist in his behalf the influence of the philosopher's wife. In the meanwhile, Maximus lived at Constantinople, surrounded and followed by the adorers of the rising star, who did not leave him a moment's peace, so that he was obliged to seek the aid of some one who could relieve him, in part, of his too onerous duties. Chrysantius still persisting in his refusal, the philosopher Priscus was chosen. From this time, Maximus and Priscus never abandoned the Emperor; they followed him through his campaign in Persia, and we find them under his tent, and by the side of the wounded hero, who, with serene and lofty discourses, prepared himself for death. Julian having fallen, Maximus dragged out his life in the midst of the most tragic events. Persecuted, despoiled, and tortured by Valens and

his soldiers, afterwards saved by Clearchus, who reinstated him in the favour of the Emperor, he finally fell under suspicion of having participated in a plot, and was beheaded at Ephesus.[1] Maximus exercised a great and decided influence over the restless and mystical spirit of Julian. He recognises this in his discourse against the cynic Heraclius, and attributes to the "highest philosopher" who instructed him, all the merit of his initiation into the true philosophy.[2] This Maximus, although interesting because of his enthusiastic devotion to Julian, taken altogether, is a most antipathetic personage. A charlatan, superstitious, puffed up with pride, anxious for power and pre-eminence, and giving himself the airs of being inspired and superhuman, he aroused the anger and hatred of those around him, so that, as soon as his protector disappeared, they dragged him to ruin. Eunapius relates a tragi-comical episode concerning him, which certainly does not serve to weaken our sense of repulsion for this species of Neo-Platonic magician, notwithstanding the terrible fate that overtook him at the end of his stormy career. When Maximus was being tortured by the ruffians of Valens, his passionate and courageous wife was present, suffering agonies. Maximus whispers to her—"My wife, go and buy me a poison; give it to me and liberate me." And she immediately goes,

[1] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 63.—Ammianus Marcellinus, *op. cit.*, ii. 170.
[2] Julian., *op. cit.*, 304, 21.

and returns with the poison, but not wishing to outlive her husband, asks his permission to drink first. She drinks, and dies immediately. But Maximus did not drink—*ὁ δέ Μάξιμος ἔπιεν ουκέτι.*[1]

Another important and not very sympathetic personage who remained to the last with Julian, is Priscus; he also was of the school of Ædesius. So learned that he seemed to have on the tip of his tongue all the doctrines of the ancients, he was most beautiful in person, but sullen and disagreeable in manner. He did not care to condescend to discussions, but kept his knowledge within himself, as if it were a treasure, and called all those who spoke willingly of philosophy, prodigals. It appears that Ædesius was a most amiable master, who adopted in his teachings the Socratic method, conversing with every one, and infusing in his disciples courtesy and a sentiment of humanity.[2] Passing through the streets of Pergamos, accompanied by a number of his pupils, he talked with every one and about everything, with the market-woman, the weaver, the smith, the carpenter, and, from every one and everything, he drew arguments for wise instructions. The pupils enjoyed such conversations. Priscus alone rebelled, and dared to call the master a betrayer of the philosophical dignity, a gabbler, who filled the mind with foolish gossip,

[1] Eunapius, 59.

[2] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 66. *ἁρμονίαν τινα καὶ ἐπιμέλειαν πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπειον ἐμφυτεύων τοῖς μαθηταῖς.*

and accomplished nothing. Priscus, therefore, was certainly an egregious pedant, and so we cannot say that poor Julian was very fortunate in the choice of the philosophical companions who followed him during his short reign. Pedantry did not, however, deprive Priscus of prudence and sagacity in his worldly affairs, so that, unlike the ambitious and reckless Maximus, he succeeded in escaping from the peril that menaced him after Julian's death. He retired into Greece, where he lived until he was ninety years old, perpetually wrapt in his mysterious and saturnine silence, but, in his heart, ridiculing the foibles of poor humanity.[1]

It would have been of great advantage to Julian if he had been able to attach to himself the amiable Chrysantius, the best balanced, most gentle and judicious of Ædesius' pupils, instead of the charlatanic and haughty Maximus and the heavy and repellent Priscus. We do not mean to say by this that the philosophical tendencies of Chrysantius were wise and commendable. His devotion to Maximus and his theurgic rites were sufficient to prove the contrary. At the beginning of his philosophical education, Chrysantius had embraced with fervour the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, and had become so strong in these doctrines that he feared no competitor, and was able to come out victorious in every discussion. Later, however, through the influence of Maximus,

[1] Eunabius, *op. cit.*, 67. *γελῶν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀσθένειαν.*

he was attracted to the doctrine of Pythagoras and to those theurgic and divinatory rites which constitute the Neo-Platonic religion, and, in short, he became such an adept as to be able to say that he understood the future better than the present, as if he were in unceasing communication with the gods.[1] Concerning this subject, there even arose a dissension between Maximus and himself, as the former, in his overweening pride, pretended that the divination of the future must be subordinated to one's own will and desires; Chrysantius, on the other hand, humbly followed the divine inspiration. But, with all this, Chrysantius was a man of great acumen and undoubted common sense. In his obstinate refusal to accept the invitations of his old pupil, when this pupil had attained the height of power, he was guided, not only by the omens, which were said to be unfavourable to his voyage, but especially by a keen perception of the imprudence and levity with which the Emperor undertook to revive Hellenism in opposition to Christianity. Of this, Chrysantius has given a striking and interesting proof, because, coming as it does from a friend and co-religionist, it is an explicit condemnation of Julian's conduct. The latter not being in the least offended by the repeated refusal of his master, decided to give him a proof of his confidence and affection before he started for Persia, and named him High Priest of Lydia. Chrysantius

[1] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 109.

accepted, but exercised his office in a peculiar manner, and certainly little in keeping with the intentions of Julian. While, in all parts of the empire, people rushed with the greatest eagerness to rebuild the temples, Chrysantius remained quiescent, not even attempting to disturb the Christians, so that, in Lydia, one could almost say that they were unconscious of the restoration of polytheism. Consequently, when Julian fell, and things returned to their original condition, in the region over which Chrysantius held spiritual jurisdiction, there was not the slightest disorder, but, instead, there reigned the most profound peace, which was all the more singular and marvellous, in comparison with the whirlwind of passion and revenge which swept across the rest of the Empire.[1] It is easy to understand how Chrysantius, with his great prudence and common sense, while remaining an ardent Hellenist, was able to pass tranquilly through an epoch so terribly agitated by religious disputes, and to attain the ripest old age.

Oribasius of Pergamos had also a paramount influence over Julian, in the psychological moment of his rebellion against Constantius, and probably assisted in the preparation of the military *pronunciamiento* which proclaimed him Emperor. He was a philosopher and doctor, also belonging to the Neo-Platonic coterie. We know that Oribasius was the only one of Julian's friends who

[1] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 111.

was permitted to accompany him to Gaul. Julian asked for him as his physician, and his request was granted, as it was not known that Oribasius was his friend. We have already seen the curious letter in which Julian relates to his friend a dream wherein his coming fortune is clearly foretold—one of those happy dreams that only come to those who especially long for something. Oribasius and the faithful servant Evemerus were the only ones who knew of the mysterious and sacred rites that Julian practised together with the high priest whom he had brought from Greece to Paris. Eunapius says that he will narrate minutely, in a history of Julian (which, unfortunately, is not preserved), all that Oribasius did, and, in his life of Oribasius, makes use of a complex and pregnant phrase which lends itself to various interpretations, but appears to accentuate the important part that the physician had in Julian's rebellion, because it says that the courage of Oribasius was so great that it enabled him to make Julian Emperor.[1] When the catastrophe arrived, Oribasius was sent into exile among the barbarians, but being of great value to all, because of his medical knowledge, he succeeded in keeping afloat in the shipwreck of Hellenism, and those who had despoiled him recalled him, and reinstated him in his honours and possessions.

[1] Eunapius, *op. cit.*, 104. ὁ δὲ τοσοῦτον ἐπλεονέκτει ταῖς ἄλλαις ἀρεταῖς, ὥστε καὶ βασιλέα τὸν Ἰουλιανὸν ἀπέδειξε.

In this group of philosophers and friends, all of whom had been, at some time, masters or companions of Julian, and whom he gathered around him during his adventurous career, Sallustius was the best balanced and most trustworthy, the faithful counsellor whom we have already mentioned when narrating the life of Julian, and with whom we shall become better acquainted when reading the long letter that Julian wrote him when they were about to separate. As writer and philosopher, he was so skilful and profound as to be able to compose a clear and popular *résumé* of the Neo-Platonic doctrine, "for the use of those who may still be guided by philosophy, and whose souls are not yet irrevocably corrupted."[1] He was also a man of the highest moral value, and of great ability in all matters military and administrative; a man, in fact, who was truly worthy of the confidence that Julian reposed in him. In the following noble sentence Sallustius has unwittingly portrayed himself: "Good men return to the gods, but, even if this were not so, virtue in itself, and the happiness and the glory that is derived from it, and a life without malice and without masters, are sufficient for the happiness of the virtuous."

That a man like Sallustius could join the Neo-Platonic coterie, and accept its doctrines, proves that, beneath the overgrowth of fantastic

[1] Zeller, *op. cit.*, 3, 734.

superstitions, which were but the expression of the religious necessities of the epoch, there existed a nucleus of healthy and honest thought and sentiment. Expiring Hellenism not only sent forth a flash of dim and clouded light, such as emanated from the exalted fantasies of an Iamblichus and a Maximus, but also possessed a moral force, which caused it to retain the favour and devotion of many among the best and most cultured men. It is not true that the best part of society in the fourth century was found among the Christians. Victorious and Imperial Christianity had attached to itself all that was most debased. And among the men of the greatest moral worth there were yet those who fought to preserve the ancient and enfeebled civilisation.

Together with these masters and illustrious men who were with Julian at Nicomedia, Pergamos, and Athens, there must have been other companions of less pretensions, whose names are not preserved, and who formed around him a species of court, attracted by his princely dignity, and the force and stimulus of his intelligence and wit. Some of Julian's notes and letters appear to have been written to these friends of his school-days. Such undoubtedly were Eumenes and Pharianus, to whom Julian sent from Gaul the following affectionate and sensible letter, in which we recognise more plainly the influence of Ædesius and of Eusebius

than that of Maximus and Priscus. Later, when he attempted to oppose religion to religion and miracle to miracle, Maximus and Priscus became the exclusive dominators of his spirit.

"To Eumenes and Pharianus, — If any one has told you that there is anything more agreeable and necessary for a man, than to philosophise, tranquilly and without preoccupations, such a man, being deceived, has deceived you. If the old inclination is still alive in you, and has not been suddenly extinguished as a once brilliant flame, I congratulate you. It is now four years and three months from the day in which we parted. How pleased I should be to ascertain your progress during this time! As for me, it is wonderful that I am yet able to speak Greek, as I have become so barbarised by these surroundings! I advise you not to despise the exercise of logic, nor to neglect rhetoric and the reading of the poets. However, your greatest interest should be for science, and you should direct all your efforts to the study of Aristotle and Plato. To this you should devote all your labour; this is the basis, the foundation, the walls, the roof. All the rest is accessary. But even on this, you should expend greater care than others generally do on their principal work. In the name of divine Justice I counsel you, concerning all this, because I love you as brothers. You were, at one time,

my companions and very dear ones. If you will be advised by me, I will love you still more, while it would be a great grief for me, if I were to see you disobey me. And I do not ask you to say where a continued suffering leads, because I feel that I can wish something better for you."[1]

In closing this study, which has revealed to us the intellectual atmosphere in which Julian's mind was developed, we may affirm, in conclusion, that Neo-Platonism and Christianity appeared at the moment when the sentiment of patriotism and political liberty, which constituted the force of ancient society, was about to be extinguished. The national religion was no longer a power; the ideas which had been the props of social life were destroyed; there existed an overpowering presentiment of an approaching catastrophe, and, at the same time, decided aspirations toward a moral regeneration which would restore the value, the interest, and the significance of life. To satisfy these aspirations, Neo-Platonism and Christianity were born, and each of them sought to reawaken the idea of a revelation and a consequent union of the human soul with God. But Neo-Platonism, which was unwilling to break through the traditions of Hellenism, sought this revelation in the natural order of the world, and from this it arrived at the conception of the super-

[1] Julian, *op. cit.*, 565.

natural, to which it abandoned itself in an ecstasy of mystical rapture. Christianity found this revelation in the historic person of Jesus, who represented the Logos, the Incarnate Word, and had united man and God in the bonds of love. Neo-Platonism desired to heal the evils of the times with a speculation which contained in itself the treasures of Greek philosophy, and would be its compendium and crown. Christianity set up a new God, diffused the tidings of a celestial redemption, proclaimed the equality of men in the fatherly love of God. Neo-Platonism and Christianity bore evidence that a new ideal had arisen, to which the antique forms seemed insufficient. Neo-Platonism attempted to adapt the antique forms to this new ideal. Christianity shattered those forms, and inaugurated a new world and a new humanity. Because of this similarity of its point of origin and aims, Neo-Platonism was able to introduce itself into Christianity, and become the principal factor of its metaphysics. In the diversity of means by which each tried to attain the same end, lay the contrast which made the Neo-Platonists the last and most ardent defenders of Hellenism against the dissolvent action exercised by Christianity.

JULIAN'S ATTITUDE

When Julian took in hand the reins of government, he found paganism persecuted and oppressed, and Christianity divided into two distinct parties, who attacked each other with ever increasing ferocity. We have seen that Constantine's attempt to render the unified and concordant Church an instrument of government had signally failed, because the irreconcilableness of the theological parties was an obstacle that even his strong will was powerless to overcome. This discord became greater on account of the difference of opinion between Constantine's sons; for while Constans, the Emperor of the West, protected Nicene Orthodoxy, Constantius, Emperor of the East, was a warm supporter of Arianism. And when the latter became sole Emperor, Arianism, though in a milder form, triumphed everywhere and in everything. Constantius exiled from their sees the bishops who remained faithful to the Nicene formula, and persecuted with equal vehemence Orthodoxy and paganism. But among those who upheld Nicene Orthodoxy were such lofty and intrepid spirits that it was impossible to suppose that their condemna-

tion could be lasting and without appeal. Constantius thought he had imposed peace on the Church, but it was only a forced truce, a momentary smouldering of the fire, the embers of which were yet alight, and ready to break forth into a new flame.

In the midst of this spectacle of discord and internal strife that was offered by Christianity and the corruption dominant in Christian society, especially that of the Imperial court, Julian, who with his brother, by reason of their tender age, had escaped the general massacre of the rest of his family perpetrated by Constantius, was born and bred. As we have already narrated, he was educated in Constantinople by Mardonius, who secretly infused in the soul of the child a deep admiration for the ancient Hellenic culture, and also the habit of considering the ancients as the true custodians of virtue, and of seeing in them unrivalled examples of the good and beautiful. Consigned to the solitude of Macellus, surrounded by priests in whom he only saw his jailers, and courtiers of the detested Constantius, the youth, under the veil of a necessary hypocrisy, became ever more inflamed with zeal for his ideals. What was Christianity to him? The religion of his enemies, a religion that seemed to have sanctioned a most terrible murder, a religion that adapted itself to the vices and turpitudes of a wicked court, and was, besides, corroded by fraternal strife which disturbed the serenity of the soul and destroyed all

confidence in its doctrine. But perhaps his aversion to Christianity might have remained latent, if he had not been exiled to Nicomedia through the miserable suspicions of Constantius. Here, in the hotbed of Neo-Platonism, which had already accomplished, in the school of Iamblichus, its religious and superstitious evolution, Julian found that complex of doctrines which rendered it possible for him to organise "anti-Christianity" in a practical and philosophical system, while the influence of Libanius and the rhetoricians by whom he was surrounded encouraged him more and more in his passion for Hellenism.

Now we must try to discover what were really the doctrines of Julian, what were the principal reasons that influenced him to devote himself to the restoration of paganism, and what was the especial aim that he had in view. For this we must have recourse to Julian's own works. He himself, with his own voice, must enlighten us concerning his intentions, and relate the story of his unhappy, but most interesting, attempt. First we must seek to form a conception of the philosophical ideas that composed the basis of Julian's thoughts. We know that he was a pupil of Iamblichus and Maximus, of those two Neo-Platonic masters who had transformed the pantheistic system of Plotinus into a superstitious mysticism that attached itself to the ancient polytheism by attempting to revive its myths, but altering, however, the very essence of its nature.

We shall see what was the influence of such teachings on Julian's mind. In the second place, we must observe Julian's position face to face with Christianity, the manner in which he understood and combated it from a doctrinal point of view, and, finally, his acts and conduct as a restorer of polytheism as the State religion. The study that we have already made of Julian's life, of the conditions of the Church in his time, and of Neo-Platonic philosophy, its tendencies, and its essential principles, renders more easy the reconstruction of the intellectual figure of the young Emperor.

It would be a useless attempt to make a precise and systematic exposition of Julian's philosophy, because he did not have a clear and defined system of ideas, but rather a confused mass, circumscribed by a network of Neo-Platonic mysticism. The young Emperor, who died at the age of thirty-two, did not have time to give precise form to his thoughts, especially as, in his adolescence and very early youth, his life was, as it were, suspended by a thread, as he was always in danger of being murdered by his evil and suspicious cousin. In the last eight years of his life, being suddenly made general and administrator, he still continued to be surrounded by the gravest preoccupations, governing Gaul, repulsing the successive Germanic invasions, later, attempting the usurpation of the

Imperial throne, and, finally, entering upon that Persian campaign in which he met his death. It is really marvellous how, in such a short and agitated existence, he found time to write and think so much. But his thoughts and his writings were sensibly affected by the tumultuous life he led, and therefore lack all system and sound reflection. He himself narrates that, profiting by the short respite from his many preoccupations, he often composed his philosophical dissertations during the night, rapidly and without books, more as a vent to a soul overflowing with ideas and impressions than with literary or instructive intentions.

But the most special reason for the congested and confused aspect of Julian's ideas was due to the doctrines themselves by which he was inspired. In his time, the dominant philosophy of the Hellenic world was Neo-Platonism, which following in the track of Plato, but with unrestrained and confused fantasy, sought, in the rarefied air of the ideal, or rather of the supernatural, the explanation of nature and existence. Now, Neo-Platonism, just because it affirmed the existence of the supernatural, and has placed it as the First Cause of nature, is essentially a theistic doctrine. The atheism of Epicurus and Lucretius, which, in its mechanical conception of the world, excluded the action of the supernatural, did not succeed in making any progress. Neo-Platonism found itself at the opposite pole. The problem

of philosophical speculation was not that of explaining the existence of the universe without the intervention of a First Cause, supernatural and creative, but rather that of determining the relationship between the cause affirmed *a priori* and the existing universe. Now, Neo-Platonism did not pretend to preserve the purely naturalistic polytheism, because it did not respond to the rational and metaphysical exigencies of the moment; nor would it accept Christianity, which, with its new affirmations, wounded all the traditions of Hellenic culture, and, by its monotheism, condemned the pantheistical tendencies of philosophy; so it composed a symbolical and mystical polytheism, pretending to find therein the representation of the creative process, while, at the same time, it left to every believer the most unbridled liberty of interpretation. We have an example in Julian himself of how far this liberty could conduce to an excess of fantasy and superstition. But here we will venture on a statement the proof of which we shall find in analysing our hero's thoughts. It would seem that between the follies and excesses of Neo-Platonic metaphysics, on the one hand, and the correct productions of dogmatic Orthodoxy on the other, there must necessarily exist an irreconcilable opposition. However, when we go to the root of the matter, we find that the opposition is all in the external efflorescence. The trunk that

sustains each of them is the same. In each of them we find the Platonic spiritualism, with the ideas pre-existent to the world—the "intelligibles," as Julian calls them. In each of them the supreme God, supernatural and unknowable, creates the world, that is to say, gives material existence to simple ideas through a divine mediator revealed to mankind: the Logos-Christ in Christian metaphysics, the sun-god in the theology of Iamblichus and Julian. Behold the common source from which burst the two streams that flowed in different directions. The Christian current was directed in the bed of Orthodox monotheism. Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine protected its course with barriers so lofty and secure as to preclude the possibility of its overflowing. The Neo-Platonic current, not finding a bed prearranged and protected, subdivided itself into an infinite number of small streams, and, finally, disappeared in the sands of the metaphysical desert.

Neo-Platonism, therefore, by ingrafting itself on polytheism, tried to organise it into a symbolic system that represented the creation, that is, the descent of the supernatural into nature. But the multiplicity of myths was an insuperable objection to the rationalisation of polytheism. Polytheism, born from the tendency of primeval man to personify the natural phenomena in determined divinities, was able to keep itself alive even in an epoch

when it had completely lost the consciousness of its primitive signification, by transforming itself into national and local religions. But when the sentiment and the devotion for the mother country disappeared in the immensity of the Roman Empire, polytheism had no longer a reason of being, and was doomed to perish. The attempts of the Neo-Platonics, of Iamblichus, Maximus, and Julian to revive it, by infusing therein a philosophical spirit, were necessarily barren, and became exhausted in puerile and pedantic efforts.

For all this, Julian's attempt is one of the most interesting episodes in ancient history; first because it is always interesting to study the intentions of a man of great soul and acute intelligence, and such the young Emperor certainly was; and, again, because this attempt is the clearest demonstration of the inevitability of the final victory of Christianity. In fact, Julian's movement was not a reactionary movement, such as it would have been if he had led back polytheism to its signification of naturalistic religion, or had revived the patriotic cult of Athens or Rome. Julian was not a reactionary; nor does the qualification of "romantic" apply to him, although he has been called so by some who found a decided analogy between him and certain writers of our century who adored the Middle Ages in modern times. It is unpardonable in Strauss to use Julian's name in a famous libel, except as a

literary artifice to satirise that King Frederick William of Prussia who dreamt of being able to oppose the thought of his time. Julian was progressive, but he had no wish to sacrifice to progress the ancient culture, of which he was a fervent admirer, and those traditions of civilisation which constituted for mankind an inestimable treasure. He, therefore, upheld polytheism, into which he introduced that culture and that civilisation, but, by upholding it, he Christianised it, not only under the aspect of metaphysics, but also, as we shall see, under that of morals and discipline. The attempt to Christianise polytheism so as to keep it alive could only be appreciated by those who shared Julian's love for that assemblage of tradition, glory, and poetry which he designated under the comprehensive title of Hellenism. But this love only existed amongst the few. In the fourth century, barbarism, even without the barbarians, was incipient. Among the masses, in which the sentiment of patriotism was extinct, Hellenism had no hold, and, on the other hand, men truly religious—men who, for the peace of their souls, truly felt the necessity of a God, such as Ambrose and Augustine—though appropriating the fundamental idea of Neo-Platonic philosophy, were necessarily obliged to repudiate its confused and stupid myths, and were horrified at the revival of rites and sacrifices which had become absurd and odious.

Having established these fundamental points, we will now give especial attention to Julian's intentions. His theological system is contained in his two dissertations, the first concerning "the Sun King," and the second "the Mother of the Gods." In this confused exposition of doctrine it is not easy to determine the respective competency of these two personages, whose actions seem to embarrass each other. But, on this point, even Julian could not have aimed at any absolute decision, because he himself relates that he wrote these little treatises at night, amidst the thousand preoccupations of the emperor and the general, and that they were the outcome of a sudden inspiration, the effect of some fugitive impressions. The discourse on the "King Sun" is dedicated to Sallustius, and was written in three nights, and without the aid of books. "If friend Sallustius"—he says—"would desire something more profound, he should turn to the books of the divine Iamblichus, in which he will find the extreme limit of human wisdom. The little that Julian knows he has learnt from him. Never mind what efforts one might make to say something new, he could never succeed in saying anything that Iamblichus had not already said. It would, therefore, be useless to try and write anything after him, if you write it with a scientific intent; but Julian simply wished to compose a hymn in honour of the god, and has sought to speak of his nature according to his own ideas, and

as well as he was able."[1] We shall follow him in his painful effort to explain his ideas.

The supreme divinity, the god around whom the universe is organised, is the sun, King Sun, as he calls him. In this adoration of the sun we recognise a genuine and poetic inspiration rather than a doctrinal precept, if we judge from the eloquent exordium of the dissertation :—

"I affirm that this discourse will be suitable to every creature who breathes and creeps on earth and who participates in life, in the rational soul and intelligence. But it is more suitable to me than to others, for I am a worshipper of the god Sun. And of this I can give the most evident proof. And may I be permitted to recall that from childhood I felt the most vivid admiration for the rays of the god, and my whole soul turned towards the eternal vault, for not only did I desire to always look at the sun, but even sometimes, during the night, I have gone out under a serene and cloudless sky, and forgetting everything, abandoned myself to the celestial beauties, so lost in admiration that I did not comprehend what was told me, and not caring what I did myself. It might have been said that I had a knowledge and familiarity with affairs that pertain to the heavens, and that, when I was a youth, some one had taught me astrology. However, I swear by the gods that no books treating of that

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 204, 4 sq.

subject ever came into my hands, and that I did not even know that such a science existed. But why do I stop to say all this when I have things so much more important to relate, if I wished to reveal what was then my belief concerning the gods? May oblivion cover that dark moment!"[1]

With this enthusiastic hymn, which manifests a most lively appreciation of nature, and reveals the impressionable disposition of the youth, and his cry of horror when he recalls the Christian training to which he was subjected, Julian begins the exposition of his theology. Now, when we seek to render the thoughts of the writer intelligible, by liberating them from the terrible phraseology of Neo-Platonic scholasticism, with which they are encumbered, we find a Trinitarian system that has the greatest analogy with that of Hebraico-Alexandrine metaphysics.

According to Julian, there exist three worlds: the world of the "intelligibles," of pure ideas, where reigns the supreme principle of the Chief Good; the world of intellectual beings or divinities placed between simple ideas and matter, as are the angels in the Christian heaven or the celestial men in the Pauline system. In this intellectual world, the Supreme Principle or First Cause reigns by means of an emanation from itself that is wholly spiritual, and which possesses the closest analogy

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 168–69.

with the Logos of Philo and Origen. Finally, the visible and concrete world in which this emanation assumes a visible form, which, according to Julian, is the sun, and for Orthodox Christianity, the humanised Logos.

Now, if we compare Julian's idea with the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, which is the basis of Christian metaphysics, and without which Christianity would never have been, or, at least, would have been entirely different, we are astonished to discover that the bitterest enemy of Christianity actually moved in the same circle of ideas as those with whom he contended. It is always the same fundamental conception of a supreme God from whom emanates a rational principle by which the world is created, and who therein becomes active by assuming a determined and sensible form. When Julian, having spoken of the two invisible forms of God, says—"This solar disc that appears as a third form of God, is the efficacious cause of the salvation of sensible beings"[1]—we only have to substitute for the word "disc" the word "Logos" in order to have a phrase purely Christian. And note that the reason for which Julian sees in the sun the revelation of God is that he considers light above all the vital and divine principle. "Light"—asks Julian—"is it not the incorporeal and divine form of that which is powerful without being

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 172, 19 sq. *τρίτος ὁ φαινόμενος ὑτοσι δίσκος ἐναργῶς αἰτιός ἐστι τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τῆς σωτηρίας.*

material?"[1] And, truly, the analogy between light and the principle of life and salvation, between the light and the Logos, is continually found in Christian books, and it is one of the *leit-motiven* on which the Fourth Evangelist embroiders with great insistence his variations. "In him (the Logos) was life, and life was the light of man. . . . That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."[2]

The fact is that all these ideas that directly took root in Platonic philosophy constituted that mixture from which issued Christian metaphysics on the one side, and Neo-Platonism on the other. The substantial elements are always the same. Alexandria was the furnace in which, through the efforts of Philo and his school, Platonic speculation became soldered with Hebraic monotheism. The metaphysician who wrote the Fourth Gospel solemnly affirms that monotheism saved Christianity from the Gnostic heresy that germinated from the Platonic leaven. But this same Alexandrine Platonic spiritualism, no longer united with monotheism, gave birth to the mystic symbolism of Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, and Porphyry, which did not differ from Christian thought, except that it

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 173, 1. *τὸ φῶς οὐκ εἶδός ἐστιν ἀσώματόν τι καὶ θεῖον τοῦ κατ' ἐνέργειαν διαφανοῦς.*

[2] John i. 4–10.

lacked dogmatic determination in its fundamental lines and in the preservation of the plurality of the gods.

But if there was an almost identity of fundamental thought between Christianity and Neo-Platonism, there was, in another respect, a difference which was the true cause of the former prevailing over the latter. It is that Neo-Platonism is only a philosophy, and Christianity is, above all, a code of morals. It is sufficient to take this discourse of Julian's, that may be considered a sort of Neo-Platonic Gospel, and place it beside the Gospel of John. In the first, the writer, after having made his metaphysical exposition, loses himself in such a confused dissertation concerning the attributes of the sun and its relations with the other Hellenic divinities, that it is difficult to decide whether it is more pedantic or childish; so, notwithstanding his efforts, he only succeeded in composing a tangle of words and ideas that must leave his readers, whom he desired to convert to his solar religion, amazed and unconvinced. The Evangelist, instead, in his prologue, introduces certain solemn theses which sound like trumpet-blasts in the mysterious silence. But having closed the prologue and affirmed the identity of Jesus Christ with the Logos, the metaphysics disappear. The relation of Christ to God is only the human relation that exists between Father and Son, and all Christ's actions are pure examples of love, and his words

are naught but a hymn, an exhortation to love. Certainly Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel, does not speak as Jesus does in the Synoptics. In his voice there resounds a note not attuned to earth. The Logos is no longer named, yet we feel that it is not a man who speaks. But with all this, the moral efficacy of these discourses, their continued and tender appeal to human sentiment, is most powerful. Here mankind, wearied of an exhausted mythology, was able to revive the impulse to believe, to find a new source of faith. But the symbolism of Julian, even though it might have pleased some fantastic dreamer, left humanity indifferent and incredulous. The dominant character of Julian's philosophy is the obscurity by which it is pervaded, not because of the profundity of its thoughts, but on account of the confusion of undigested ideas and the effort to give precise forms to vague and variable conceptions.

If a fundamental idea can be said to exist in this philosophy, it is still the Platonic principle of the pre-existence of the idea, of which the visible world, the world of sense, is the reproduction, brought about by means of a creative god, who, according to Julian, has emanated and separated from the supreme God, and who reveals itself under the aspect of the sun. The ideal forms must exist before the real forms. Therefore "when the substance that reveals itself as generatrix in nature is prepared to generate in beauty and produce a son

(ὑπεκτίθεσθαι τὸν τόκον), it is necessary that it be preceded by the substance eternally generatrix in ideal beauty, which does not produce intermittently, because that which is beautiful has been beautiful in the ideal world from all eternity. We therefore say that the generative cause in phenomena must be preceded and guided by an idea inborn in the eternal beauty that God holds and disposes around himself, and to which he gives perfect intelligence; as with the light he gives sight to the eyes, so with the ideal model that he presents, and which is much more luminous than the ethereal rays, he gives to all intelligent beings the faculty of knowing and being known." [1]

This Platonic theory of the pre-existence of the idea which is the consequence of the distinction between the two categories of spirit and matter is found at the basis of Christian metaphysics and of orthodox spiritualism, and, later on, it becomes the realism of Scholasticism. This theory had its last affirmation in the philosophy of Rosmini. To find a tie between Julian and Rosmini seems to be the acme of extravagance, and almost a sacrilege. However, if we look deeply into the matter, we find that the intellectual connection exists, as it existed between Julian and the theologians of the Councils whom he abhorred and by whom he was afterwards so fiercely anathematised. The reason of this is that men do not unite or divide because

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 188, 5 sq.

of the similitude or difference of ideas. They unite or divide when their moral habits and aspirations harmonise or disagree. Christianity and Hellenism are equal so far as the idea and theory that they represent. They could not be otherwise, because they both had their source in common, and because they responded both to the same necessities of the human mind. But these ideas were only the vestments which covered moral tendencies, completely different, and to which they adapted themselves in such a manner as to appear, on the one hand, human errors, and, on the other, divine revelations. Nevertheless, it was always the same covering, differently arranged, or, to use another simile, the same viands differently dressed. Christianity which introduced into the world a scope of moral finality never to be attained upon earth, because the world is most wicked, transported human interest from earth to heaven, from the present to the transcendental, from life to the hereafter. Hellenism, not appreciating this scope of moral finality, and for which, therefore, the world was most excellent, wished to preserve human interest in the present, and also that immense treasure of traditions, poetry, and glory which had accumulated in antiquity, and which Christianity abhorred and condemned. The Platonic spiritualism—the product of the intellectual atmosphere of the epoch—served as well in one direction as in the other.

But Christianity in the fourth century had

become so diffused, and it had entered so deeply into social habits, that even its enemies were obliged to subscribe to it, and sometimes to assume its language. From this, Julian borrowed a fervour, a mystic flame unknown to the ancients. The Discourse on King Sun finishes with a hymn. Julian assumes in it the attitude of a devotee. If we recognise in his words something artificial and scholastic; if it is not the ecstasy of Plotinus who sinks himself and loses himself in God, nor the *élan* of Augustine vibrating with the emotion of a soul wrapped in divine contemplation, there is, however, a profound religious sentiment, deeper than that which animated the worshippers of polytheism. "May the gods grant me to celebrate many times the sacred feast, and may the sun-god, King of the universe, — he who proceeds from all eternity from the generative substance of the Good, who, in the midst of the intellectual gods, fills them with infinite harmony and beauty, with fruitful substance, perfect intelligence, and continually and without end, with every good; he who from all eternity shines in the seat destined for him in the midst of the heavens; he who gives to every visible being the beauty of idea; he who fills the heavens with as many gods as are comprehended in his intelligence; he who in virtue of his generative continuity and of the beneficent power emanating from his circular body, harmonises

the compages of this sublunary sphere, caring for all the human race, and, in a special manner, for this our empire; he who from eternity has created our soul, making it his follower. Concede then unto me all that I have prayed for, and maintain with benevolence the continuity of the empire. Vouchsafe unto us to succeed well in matters divine and human, as long as we are permitted to live, and may our existence last as long as it is pleasing unto him, and profitable to us, and necessary to the prosperity of Roman affairs. Once again I beseech the Sun, king of all things, because of my devotion, to be benevolent to me, and give me a happy life, a steady mind, a divine intelligence, and, finally, at the destined moment, a most tranquil liberation from life, and grant me to ascend and remain near him, possibly through eternity, and, if this be beyond my merits, at least for many periods of harmonious years."[1]

Together with the Discourse to King Sun, Julian has left another theological treatise, or hymn, as one might call it, to the "Mother of the Gods," written by the enthusiastic Emperor in a single night at Pessinus, while on his way to Persia. The composition, laboured and confused as are all the philosophical and theological manifestations of Julian, commences with a famous and delightful legend, which Julian relates with

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 203, 4 sq., and 205, 5 sq.

the genuine simplicity of the true poet. We shall reproduce it here to show that, in the pedantic and rhetorical pupil of Libanius and Maximus, there existed a spirit full of grace and feeling. After stating that the Greeks held in high honour the Mother of the Gods, he records that the Romans, at the time of the war against Carthage, sought, by the counsel of the Pythoness, to render her favourable to them, and then he continues: "And here there is no objection to my narrating a short story. Having heard of the oracle, the inhabitants of God-fearing Rome decided to send an embassy to demand of the King of Pergamum, who then possessed Phrygia, and the Phrygians themselves, the image of the goddess. Having received the sacred charge, they placed it on a large transport, able to sail securely on the boundless sea. Having crossed the Ægean and Ionian Seas, and after sailing along the Sicilian coast, they arrived at the mouth of the Tiber. And the people issued from the city, with the Senate, and they were preceded by the priests and priestesses, everything in suitable order, and according to the rites of the nation. And anxiously they regarded the ship that rapidly came towards them under a fair wind, while the ploughed waves dashed their foam around its keel. When it was on the point of entering, every one prostrated themselves to the earth on the place where they

THE VIRGIN CLAUDIA DRAGGING THE VESSEL OF THE MOTHER OF THE GODS.
(From a Terra-Cotta Relief.)

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were standing. But the goddess, as if she desired to prove to the people that it was not simply a sculptured stone — an inanimate statue that they had brought from Phrygia — but an object possessed of great and divine force, as soon as the ship touched the Tiber, behold, it stopped and remained immovable as if it had suddenly taken root in the bed of the river. The people pulled it against the current, but it refused to move. Supposing it to be aground, they apply all sorts of engines to it; but the ship still remains immovable. Then there arose a most terrible and vile suspicion concerning the virgin consecrated to the most holy priesthood. And Claudia was accused—such being the name of the saint—of not having remained undefiled and pure in the service of the goddess, who thus openly manifested her disdain. Claudia blushed with shame at hearing her name and these suspicions, so far was she from unlawful and illicit acts, but, hearing that the accusations against her were increasing in force, she loosens her girdle, attaches it to the extreme bowsprit of the ship, and, as if inspired, commands them all to stand back, and she prays the goddess not to abandon her a victim to this iniquitous outrage, and then, with a loud voice, almost as if giving a naval command: —'Holy Mother!' she exclaimed—'if I am pure, follow me!' And, behold, the virgin not only moves the ship, but drags it along a good way

against the current! . . . I know"—concludes Julian—"that some among those who give themselves the air of being wise, will say this is an old woman's tale. But I prefer to believe the popular traditions rather than these wiseacres whose little intelligences may be acute, but to me have the air of being morbid!"[1]

The discourse concerning the Mother of the Gods is most interesting, because it shows the process of mystical interpretation that Julian, a disciple of the Neo-Platonists, applied to the ancient legends in order to rationalise them and render them acceptable to the idealistic and spiritualistic metaphysics that dominated the thought of that time.

Julian starts, in his interpretation, from the fundamental principle of Platonic philosophy, already affirmed by him in his discourse on the King Sun, namely, the existence of an ideal world, of which the material world is the reflection. The images of beings, as Aristotle teaches, exist reflected again in the soul, but they exist ideally and potentially. "But it is also necessary that the image before existing in power should exist in action. What place shall we assign unto them? Possibly in material things? It is clear that these come last. Nothing remains, therefore, but to seek ideal causes that preordain the material,[2]

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 207, 5 sq.

[2] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 212, 18. λείπεται δὴ λοιπὸν ἀύλους αἰτίας ζητεῖν ἐνεργείᾳ προτεταγμένας τῶν ἐνύλων.

from which our souls, subordinate and co-existent, receive as a mirror the images of the objects, the ideas of the forms, and transmit them, by means of nature, to matter and to the material bodies." [1]

Now the myth of Cybele, or the Mother of the Gods, is for Julian the symbolic representation of the procedure by which the idea becomes concrete in matter, and returns afterwards to its primitive essence. According to the legend, it is said that Cybele became chastely enamoured of Atys, and enjoined upon him not to know any woman. But Atys became inflamed with love for the nymph Sangaris, and penetrating into the cave where she lived, they became united. This aroused the wrath of Cybele, and, in order to appease it, Atys was obliged to emasculate himself, before he could be restored to the position of honour that he primitively held. It is clear that this story was originally a nature-myth that represented the succession of the seasons — a myth that was, like many others, humanised and dramatised by Oriental and Hellenic fantasies. Julian pretends to see in this myth the expression of a philosophical conception, and, in order to succeed in demonstrating this, he torments it with a subtlety of interpretation, fantastic and extraordinary. Nevertheless, even in this instance, it is not without interest to note the great efforts that these revivers of paganism made to introduce

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 212, 19 sq.

into ancient myths thoughts which they never could have contained; in other words, to pour new wine into old bottles, already cracked and broken. We must give some examples of these efforts.

"Who is the Mother of the Gods? She is the source of all the gods, ideal and creative, who govern the visible gods; the goddess who cohabits and generates with the great God; great also she after the greatest; the mistress of all life, the cause of every generation, who immediately perfects that which she has made; who generates without suffering, and who together with the Father, creates all beings; virgin without a mother; sharing the throne of God, she is the Mother of all the Gods, and since she comprehends in herself the cause of all the gods, ideal and supernatural, she becomes the source of all the cognoscible gods. This goddess and this providence fell in love with Atys."[1] Atys represents in this myth the creative and generative principle. Now the goddess, when she became enamoured of Atys, enjoined on him to generate solely in idea, only regarding that which is the symbol of unity, and to avoid every inclination towards the material. But Atys was not able to remain faithful to the goddess, and thence descended to the procreation of material forms. Now, it is in order to recall the generative

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 215, 5 sq.

principle to the ideal world, and prevent its being corrupted and entirely lost in the material, that the Mother of the Gods, together with the Sun, who is with her the providential principle, and who can do nothing without her, induces Atys to emasculate himself, which represents the limitation in the material decadence of the generative principle, and its return to the ideal world. If this limitation had not been willed by Providence, the generative principle, raging in its material excesses, would exhaust itself and become impotent for its ideal function.[1] And Julian closes this singular interpretation of the myth with the following words: "This myth teaches us that, though celestial in our natures, we have come on earth to hasten to return to God, the giver of life, after having gathered, in our earthly sojourn, virtue and piety. Therefore the signal of recall that the trumpet gives to Atys after his emasculation, it gives also to us, who from heaven have fallen to earth. If Atys with his emasculation limits the infinity of his fall, the gods also command us to emasculate ourselves, that is, to limit in ourselves the material infinity, and strive to attain the formal, and as far as possible, the essential unity. What is there more joyful, more glorious, than a soul which escapes from the whirlwind awakened in it by the materiality of desires and the impulses of generation, and which

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 217, 8 sq.

lifts itself on high, even to the gods? And Atys, who was one of these, was not abandoned by the Mother of the Gods, who yet wished him near her, and arrested him in the infinity of his fall."[1]

Julian, after having given an extraordinary and lengthy exposition of the divine legend, insists on its essentially mythical character. "Let no one suppose that I speak of these things as having really happened, just as if the gods did not know what they should do, or that they were obliged to correct their own mistakes. But the ancients, either guided by the gods, or thinking for themselves, and discovering the causes of things, veiled them with strange myths, in order that this device, by its strangeness and obscurity, might incite us to the search after truth. To ordinary men the irrational symbol is sufficient, but for those who are distinguished for their intelligence, divine truths are satisfactory only when they are discovered, after having been sought by the aid of the gods. The enigmas cause us to reflect, and we are obliged to investigate them, so, by means of observation, we arrive at the discovery of the truth, not because of respect for, and faith in, the opinions of others, but rather by the force of our own intelligence."[2] The rigorous rationalism that reveals itself in these few sentences must have caused Julian to verify the complete evaporation of his divinities. But he

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 219, 19 sq.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 220, 8 sq.

wished to uphold a religion because the Neo-Platonic doctrine, in which he had been educated, affirmed the existence of the supernatural, and, therefore, the necessity of a positive religion, and, furthermore, because he wished to be the restorer of a cult worthy of being opposed to Christianity. Hence a singular contradiction in its manifestations, and an intrinsic defect in the system, that rendered its victory over Christianity impossible; for Christianity, on the contrary, possessed a God so well specified, so clear, so historical, as to be able to collect in himself the mythical and metaphysical principles of the Logos without in any way losing his personal efficacy. But Julian, notwithstanding, made every effort to preserve to the gods, concerning whom he reasoned with a subtlety, at the same time fantastic and pedantic, a sufficient reality to enable them to receive adoration and prayers. We have already seen the beautiful words with which he begins and ends his discourse to the King Sun. The discourse addressed to the Mother of the Gods finishes likewise with the prayer of a fervent believer. "O Mother of Gods and of Men, who dost sit on the throne of God, origin of the gods; thou who dost participate in the pure essence of the ideas, comprehending in thyself the cause of all, and dost infuse it in the ideal beings, goddess of life, revealer, providence and creatrix of our souls; thou who hast saved Atys, and hast recalled him from the cavern in which he was hurled; thou who

bestowest all gifts on the ideal gods, and with them overflowest the sensible world,—I beseech thee, concede to all men happiness, the summit of which is the knowledge of the gods; cause the Roman people to cast out the sin of impiety, and may a benignant fate preserve to them the Empire for many thousands of years. Permit me to reap, as fruit of my devotion to thee, the truth of divine science, perfection in worship, virtue and success in all political and military enterprises which we undertake, and a termination of life regretless and glorious, together with the hope of drawing near unto thee."[1]

Omitting and modifying certain phrases which are, above all, ornamental, is not this a prayer that might have escaped from the lips of a Christian? Do we not feel in its depth the identical inspiration? This invocation of the Mother of the Gods comes, it is true, after a long discourse in which the personality of the goddess, passing through the filter of mythical explanations, is entirely evaporated, so that the prayer addressed to her is lost in space. But when we recall that this prayer is written by a man who undertook the most hazardous enterprises, and did not hesitate to confront the most extreme peril, we cannot consider this supplication as a vain declamation; we feel that the words express a true sentiment. The sentiment modifies itself in expression according to the form it assumes, but

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 232, 13 sq.

the religious sentiment is no less living in Julian, who had become an apostate from Christianity, than in many of those who became converts to this same Christianity.

The theory of the value and signification of the myths has in Julian the greatest importance. It is, if we may so express it, the keystone of the arch that prevented it from falling to pieces. In Neo-Platonic pantheism the divinities and fables of polytheism could find no place, and, moreover, the great conception of Plotinus, by which the universe is the extrinsic part of a unique and supreme principle that manifests itself with the idea reflected by the concrete forms, might have led to an ecstatic meditation on divinity, but could not closely fit in with a positive religion. And in truth, Plotinus, as Porphyry relates in the life of the master, sometimes became sublimated in the divine vision, without participating in any determined cult. But his successors, influenced in part by the psychological conditions of the time, and in part by the necessity of preoccupying a position that otherwise would have been taken by Christianity, desired to create a positive religion, and not having at their disposal any determined historical and divine figure, they took the ancient divinities of polytheism, and insisted upon bestowing on them a worship of sacrifice and prayer, at the same time affirming that they were not divinities, but mere symbols of

philosophical conceptions. In this direction no one went farther than Julian, who was, it may be said, filled with metaphysical doctrines badly digested, and who, being an emperor inimical to Christianity, wished to introduce an absolute religion of State which would prevent the destruction of Hellenism.

Julian did not in the least believe in the objective reality of the polytheistic personifications. In a most clever and jocose note to a friend, he writes: "Echo is for thee a chattering goddess, and the consort of Pan. I say nothing to the contrary. Since, even if Nature teaches me that Echo is the sound of the voice that, sent back, passing through the air, returns to the ear, therefore agreeing with the belief of the ancients and the moderns no less than with Nature, I will admit that she is a goddess."[1] But if Julian, as we gather from these words, was able with his acute intelligence to disengage the myths in his affirmation of natural phenomena, he preserved them as symbols of philosophical conceptions, and his greatest desire was, rationally to justify such a transformation. The thesis already alluded to in the discourse addressed to the Mother of the Gods is fully treated in one of Julian's most curious writings, the discourse against the cynic Heraclius.

This discourse, which contains many pages full of wit and elegance, but which lacks the "restraint of

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 564.

art," as is the case in most of Julian's writings, is especially interesting for two reasons, first because we find expressed the conception that Julian, following in the footsteps of the Neo - Platonists, formed of the myth and of the signification of the mythological legends; and, secondly, because, in a very beautiful and clear allegory, he relates his own story, and affords the justification of his actions, and formulates, so to speak, his Imperial programme.

This discourse must be the consequence of some preceding facts with which we are not acquainted, but which we may imagine with a great probability of approximating to the truth. Julian, on becoming Emperor, must have encountered the opposition of three sorts of enemies. In the first place, the Christians; then those pagans who were not pleased with the mythical transformations that the Neo-Platonic Emperor wished to impose on the ancient religion, in place of the simple, intelligible, and human fables of former times; and, finally, all those who were interested in the corrupt administration of the empire and felt the dangers of the reforms of this restless legislator. The cynic Heraclius was one who did not admit the philosophical interpretation of the Hellenic mythology, not comprehending Julian's effort to infuse into it a new spirit that would enable it to resist Christianity. Cynicism, from its most flourishing period with Antisthenes and Diogenes, had been essentially a practical

philosophy that endeavoured to teach men to content themselves with as little as possible, and to live in an ascetic indifference to all material pleasures. It kept away, in a suspicious attitude, from all metaphysical speculations, and reduced its philosophical doctrines to a few moral aphorisms. But, in the course of time, that which was best in Cynicism, its severity of life and habits, passed into Stoicism, and Cynicism became characterless, and degenerated into a doctrine of charlatans, who used it to deceive people, and found in it a source of illicit gain. The Neo-Cynics were naturally enemies of Julian, whose speculative tendencies and pure morals they hated. And Julian heartily reciprocated their feelings. In his discourse "Against Ignorant Cynics," and in that against Heraclius, he unmasks their vices, baseness, and turpitudes, by demonstrating the meanness of their doctrines, which would have embarrassed the mythological evolution that constituted for Hellenism the indispensable element of the expected victory. And Julian with malignant subtlety sees in Cynicism the ally of Christianity, and insists on the traits of resemblance, which, according to him, exist between the two sects.[1]

Heraclius having made a discourse before a large assembly, in which Julian took part, gave free course to his inventive faculty, and composed fables which, according to Julian, offended the

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 290, 7 sq.

conception of divinity. The Emperor adjourns the meeting, and indignantly takes his pen and writes an invective against the impious blasphemer, in order to demonstrate the true office of myths, and how the legends concerning the gods have to be interpreted. The discourse, as we have said, is very long, full of allusions not always comprehensible, and of conflicting and confused mythical explanations. But it is always interesting, and most symptomatic of the intention by which the author is moved to a controversy, even indirectly, with Christianity, creating symbols that might be able to take the place of the Christian God. This appears most clearly in the interpretation he gives of the fables of Hercules and Dionysus. How can we fail to recognise an attempt to Christianise the figure of Hercules, by modelling it on that of Christ, when he says that Hercules passed with dry feet across the sea, and then adds: "What could ever be impossible to Hercules? Was there anything that could disobey his divine and pure body? Were not even the elements obedient to his creative power and the perfection of his incorruptible intelligence? Jupiter the Father made him the saviour of the world, and, later, raised him on high by means of his thunderbolts, and commanded him to come near to his throne as a son, under the divine sign of eternal rays. May Hercules be propitious to me and to you!"[1]

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 284, 19 sq.

All the explanations that Julian gives of the myths are founded on a fundamental conception that he seeks to explain, though he adds that his life as a soldier, and the urgent occupations in which he was engaged, did not leave him time finally to mature his ideas.[1] "Nature"—he says—"loves to conceal herself, and the hidden part of the substance of the gods does not bear being cast with naked words into impure ears. But the ineffable essence of the Mysteries helps even when not understood; it saves souls and bodies, and evokes the presence of the gods. And so it is with myths which, through their veils and by means of enigmas, pour divine knowledge into the ears of the greater part of mankind, incapable of receiving them in their purity."[2] In these words is contained the fundamental principle that Julian has gathered from the teachings of his Neo-Platonic masters. Men are, for the most part, incapable of comprehending divine truth. The myths are the veils that cover this truth, so that it might become accessible to the human mind. The philosopher should scrutinise them in order to collect the nucleus of science and supernatural truth that is concealed in them. Julian has certainly put his finger on the root of the question when he affirms that the positive forms of religion are only symbols with which man seeks to understand the existence and nature of the universe. But his error was to believe that he could create a determined religion

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 280, 1 sq. [2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 280, 15 sq.

with such a theory. He did not appreciate wherein lay the superiority of Christianity over Neo-Platonism. The personality of Christ likewise lent itself to all symbolic interpretations, but it could not be dissipated, because it possessed a true and personal historic and objective reality, a firm position around which a positive religion might become crystallised. In Julian's mythology, instead, all reality disappeared, and nothing remained but confused mythological phantoms, and even these refused the grossly material cult which was offered to them.

As we have said, the "Discourse against Heraclius" is especially interesting, because in it Julian relates his own story. He says he wishes to show by an example how one ought to compose a new myth, and relates a long parable, which is most transparent, and, under a slight veil, presents the cause and justification of the usurpation he had attempted, and of his conduct after he had occupied the throne. The allegory is clear, and told with ease and elegance. It is a revelation of the profound honesty of Julian's soul, and of the high conception that he possessed of his duty. The Emperor Constantine, whom his nephew could never pardon for the change he had wrought in the conditions of Christianity, is represented by him as a violent and ignorant man who had accumulated immense wealth; but, lacking all method of government, and believing that force could take the place of science and virtue, he never even thought

of educating his sons for the position he knew they must some day fill. So it happened that, as soon as he was dead, his numerous heirs began to fight among themselves, and violence, murder, and crime spread in the paternal inheritance. This spectacle touched the heart of Jupiter, who called to him the Sun, to induce him to reconsider the disdainful abandonment in which he had left the impious house of this powerful man. Having also called to council the Fates, Holiness, and Justice, Jupiter makes known unto them his intention of saving a child of this house, who otherwise would soon be stifled, if they did not quickly come to his aid. The child would make amends for the many evils that Jupiter deplores. The Sun is delighted with this resolution of the father, because he sees alive in this child a spark of divine fire, so that, together with Minerva, they decide to educate him in virtue and wisdom. But when he reaches adolescence, the future restorer, seeing with his own eyes the power of evil, and becoming acquainted with the fate that was meted to his parents and his cousins, was about to hurl himself into Tartarus. Then the Sun and Minerva put him to sleep, and, by means of a dream, dissuade him from his intention. When he awakes, he finds himself in a deserted place, and there appears to him Mercury, who points out to him an easy and flowery path that leads to a high mountain, on the summit of which is the Father of the Gods. "Ask," said

Mercury, "that which thou desirest. To thee, O child, it is given to choose the best." "O Father Jupiter," exclaims the youth, "show me the path that leads to thee!" And, behold, the Sun comes near to him and tells him that he must return among the wicked from whom he has fled. The youth weeps, and foresees his death. But the Sun encourages him, and reveals to him that he is destined to purge the earth from all the impiety that has contaminated it. He must confide in him, in Minerva, and in all the other gods. The sole heir of all that is left (the Emperor Constantius), surrounded by wicked shepherds (these are the bishops), neglected everything and indulged in pleasure and idleness. Therefore the Sun, with Minerva, by the command of Jupiter, will place him in the position of heir, and governor of everything. And the parable finishes with the wise counsels that Minerva and the Sun give to their *protégé*. In very truth, if, instead of the names of Greek divinities, there had been those of angels and saints, we should recognise a purely Christian note in the last words of the Sun: "Go on thy way, therefore, with good hope, since we shall always be with thee,—I, Minerva, and Mercury, with all the other gods in Olympus, in the air and on the earth,—as long as thou art respectful to us, faithful to thy friends, kind to thy subjects, ruling and guiding them towards that which is best. Never permit thyself to become a slave of thine own passions or theirs. Go thou,

therefore, by land and by sea, obeying without hesitation our laws, and do not let any one, whether man or woman, familiar or stranger, induce thee to forget our commands. If thou observe them, thou wilt be loved by us, respected by our faithful worshippers, feared by wicked and evil-minded men. Know thou, that this carnal body was given thee in order that thou shouldst be able to accomplish this duty. We wish to purge thy house, out of respect for thy ancestors. Remember that thou hast an immortal soul procreated by us, and that if thou followest our orders, thou wilt be among the gods, and, together with us, thou wilt contemplate our Father!"[1]

Was there ever a more interesting and singular personality than that of the Emperor Julian? How was it possible that such a noble and generous descendant should have issued from the family of Constantine? There is in this long parable, of which we have given a bare skeleton, the expression of a lofty and pure sentiment that could only be possible to a soul profoundly sincere and alive to all that is good and beautiful. And here is a strange fact. It was especially the wicked Constantinians who favoured Christianity, and the only one of the family who was generous and sincere attempted the restoration of Paganism! It is because Christianity in over three centuries of its existence, corroded by heresies, and becoming

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 303, 3 sq.

rich and powerful, was transformed into a worldly institution, into a religion wholly formal, and had therefore lost, in great part, its moral efficacy. This is so true that, as a reaction against the increasing worldliness of Christianity, there developed in its bosom monkish asceticism, which revived, in part, the ideals of early Christian times. The official Christianity in which the Arians contended with the Athanasians, and attained the supremacy in honours and in riches, was already in an advanced state of corruption, when the Imperial favour, delivering it from all dangers and difficulties, accelerated its perversion. We must not forget that Constantine was a villain, guilty of the most terrible crimes, amongst which the most grave was the murder of his son Crispus. But he was a skilful adventurer, possessed of great foresight, and he understood that, after the complete failure of the systematic persecution practised by Diocletian, there was nothing for the empire to do but to ally itself with the enemy it was unable to vanquish. Hence the Edict of Milan, then the institution of a State Church and the Council of Nicæa. Constantius, who was equally as wicked as his father, but without a shadow of his intelligence, contributed greatly to the progressive deterioration of Christianity. At this spectacle Julian rebelled. Christianity, participating in the Imperial authority, had not improved it morally; on the contrary, it had been corrupted by it. "The heritage goes to ruin,"

exclaims Julian, in his allegory, — "few are the honest shepherds; for the most part they are predatory and cruel, devouring and selling the sheep of the master, and destroying his flocks!" Now, Julian was an idealist who had passed his early youth fearing an instant death, hating the Christian courtiers who surrounded his despicable cousin, immersed in his studies, and a passionate worshipper of Greek literature and philosophy, and of all that body of traditions, doctrines, and glory which he considered comprised under the name of Hellenism. There must, therefore, have arisen in his heart, first suspicion, and then abhorrence of the religion which took its place, and was the relentless enemy of all that he adored. In his inexperience of the true force which ruled the world, inebriated by the fantastic doctrines he heard proclaimed by those around him, Julian believed himself able to remedy the evil which he witnessed, by a return to the ancient beliefs, accompanying this return with a reform that would adjust the old concepts to the exigencies of the New Spirit.

Now, when we consider the intellectual value of Julian, which was truly great—a value that revealed itself in all the actions of the general, the administrator, and the writer—we must not judge his attempt too lightly, and consider it as a romantic and juvenile folly. Julian was, in character and intelligence, incomparably superior to all the Christian emperors who preceded and suc-

ceeded him. And while the others abandoned themselves to the stream, he alone attempted to swim against it. We must, therefore, admit that this movement of Julian's responded to some necessity, some aspiration, some great idea by which he was most deeply influenced. The truth is that Julian's initiative was the last and only rational effort to save civilisation. As we have said before, Constantine, seeing the failure of Diocletian's persecution, believed it best, for the safety of the empire to ally it with the enemy it could not destroy. But Constantine, a rough and ignorant man, could not appreciate the fact that Christianity was in its essence the most decided antithesis of the ancient civilisation, and that its alliance with the empire, although retarding its destructive action, rendered it by no means less positive. The empire was, necessarily, destined to be stifled in the embrace of Christianity. Christianity, directing the moral energies into a channel different from that which they had followed in the Græco-Roman world, creating new aspirations and destroying old ones, dissolved the old society and prepared the elements of a new formation. Julian understood, or at least had a clear intuition, that to save the empire it was not necessary to embrace Christianity, as Constantine had done, or to persecute it, like Diocletian, but rather to create something that responded in part to those needs which found their satisfaction in Christianity,

and at the same time preserved the basis of ancient thought and civilisation. For this purpose he initiated that movement which we have called the Christianisation of paganism. There were certainly two reasons why this movement was destined not to succeed. In the first place, the world needed a religion. It could no longer believe in polytheism, anthropomorphic and national; neither did it believe in the confused and perplexing mystical polytheism that Julian had borrowed from Neo-Platonism, and with which he deluded himself that he would be able to satisfy the religious aspirations of his contemporaries. It would have been much easier to persuade them to return to the adoration of Apollo, the charioteer of the Sun, than the new sun-god in whose mystical doctrine Julian saw a luminous revelation of the creative Trinity. In the second place, whatever the intellectual and moral value of the movement might be, it came too late. We have no statistics by which to judge in what proportions the Christians and the pagans were divided during the fourth century in the Roman world. But the promulgation of the Edict of Constantine is sufficient to convince us that the Christians must have been in great numbers. Polytheism certainly still resisted, especially in the country, which is demonstrated by the very name of pagan, which was invented by the Christians. But the latter had

the upper hand, and occupied all the offices and high positions. Conversion was no longer a simple question of conscience and faith, but an affair and matter of interest. Now, it was as utterly impossible to stay a movement that had begun in past centuries, as to stay an avalanche that, rolling down a mountain side, becomes enormously enlarged. Christianity might have been arrested when it first appeared. Notwithstanding the incomparable energy of Paul, who had plucked it from its native Palestine, to disseminate it in the world; notwithstanding the inspired fantasies of the Fourth Evangelist, who had been able to make himself master of ancient thought,—perhaps Christianity might have died out in obscurity, but for Nero's abominable and ill-considered persecutions. It is also possible that if Julian's attempt to reform polytheism had been initiated two centuries before, with more prudent and speculative moderation, by a Trajan, an Antoninus Pius, or by a Marcus Aurelius, it might have interrupted the progress of Christian propaganda. But, in Julian's time, the undertaking was utterly desperate. The fact of his not having understood this shows what an enthusiastic soul the young Emperor possessed, and how he deceived himself concerning both the value of that which he wished to destroy, and of that which he desired to substitute for it. Nevertheless, the idea by which he was inspired proceeded

from a generous spirit, enamoured of all things good and beautiful. His undertaking was the last sign of life in a world about to expire.

It may seem singular that, in the fine allegory which has been the occasion of this digression, Julian openly announces himself as the restorer of the fortunes of the empire, compromised by his predecessors, while he only makes ambiguous allusions to his war against Christianity, and no explicit declarations concerning it. Certainly those shepherds who badly counselled the masters and destroyed the flocks are Christians, and probably the bishops; the impiety from which the Sun recommends Julian to purge the earth is the Church and the traces of the Christian cult. Clearer and more harsh is the allusion to the destruction of the ancient temples, replaced, in the veneration of the worshippers, by the sepulchres of the martyrs. "The sons destroyed the temples which were first neglected by their father, and deprived them of the ornaments that their ancestors had placed there. In place of the temples laid low, they built sepulchres, old and new, influenced, as it were, by an internal voice, and by fate itself; since, in a short time, they would have need of many sepulchres, in punishment for having slighted the gods."[1] Here, without doubt, Julian alludes to Constantine and his sons. However, the special care that he takes

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, p. 296, 2 sq.

not to speak openly of Christianity, in an allegory given as his programme of government, proves that the Emperor meant to proceed gradually in his operations, not running the risk of compromising it by declarations that might awaken powerful opposition. This demonstrates, furthermore, that he appreciated the difficulty of the undertaking, and that, at least, when writing this discourse, he understood the necessity of going slowly and with great prudence.

Julian having been from early childhood shut off from all influences that might incline and open his mind to the fascination of Christianity, was in a condition of thought and soul that enabled him to scrutinise critically, and analyse from a point of view wholly objective, the elements which composed the traditions on which it was based. In fact, Christianity necessarily participated in the condition characteristic of all religions, *i.e.*, of being intangible, perfect, proved, and evident to those who believe *a priori*, and to melt away, scattered as mist before the sun, for those who do not regard it through the lens of a preconceived faith. All religions, past and present, possess the certainty of an established fact for those who profess them, and appear absolutely absurd to those outside of them. There is no man, however conceited, who does not feel constrained to admit that sometimes those who hold opposite opinions may be right. But the

mere idea of believing in the religion of Mahomet or Buddha cannot possibly enter the head of a Christian, who will find no difficulty in producing the most evident proofs of their absolute unreasonableness. And there is also not a single Mahometan or Buddhist who, in the face of Christianity, does not find himself in the same condition as the Christian is in regard to him, and who does not possess good reasons for disbelieving in that which the Christian believes. The one believes that Christ is risen from the dead because he sees it affirmed in a certain book; the Mahometan believes that Mahomet was divinely inspired because he finds it affirmed in another book. But the confidence in either of these books can only be the effect of an *a priori* sentiment. Those who have not such a sentiment immediately find that the proof of the one or the other affirmation is insufficient.

That any religion should appear irrational to those who do not believe *a priori* is the consequence of the fact that religion assumes an office beyond the sphere of reason, *i.e.*, that of representing the affinity existing between a supernatural Being, who is supposed to exist outside the world, and the world it has created. In order to accomplish this undertaking superior to reason, man can only use his own reason; but it is clear that to employ reason to represent that which is above and beyond reason can only lead to a

representation which reveals itself as irrational to those who do not look at it through the lens of a preconceived faith. To us the religion of the Japanese appears irrational; but to the Japanese the Christian religion appears equally irrational. An old Japanese writer, Hakusaki, who in 1708 knew an Italian missionary, wrote to the effect that this stranger was a wise and good man, but that he became insane as soon as he began to talk of religion. "How is it possible to conceive"—Hakusaki says—"a God who was not able to redeem a humanity lost because of a sin (of which truly we fail to see the gravity), a humanity that is his own work, and is punished for having transgressed a law that was also his work,—except by becoming man three thousand years later, and, under the name of Jesus, suffering an ignominious death? What a childish story! A sovereign judge who could not mitigate the law he had himself promulgated, or even pardon the condemned, except by taking his place in the midst of torments!"

The arguments of Hakusaki, which appear most cogent to those who do not believe, have not a shadow of influence on those who possess faith as a constituent element of their peculiar moral organisation. He who attempts to oppose religion with logical reasoning proves that he has not comprehended its essential phenomenon. These reasons that seem to the rationalist invincible weapons, are for the believer a *telum imbelle*.

Belief is not the effect of an *operation*, but rather of a *disposition* of the mind. And this disposition remains intangible, despite all rational demonstrations. Pagan polemical writers have presented these arguments in a manner analogous to that of Hakusaki; but before them uprose in revolt the human conscience, thirsting for redemption, anxious for a palingenesis that would enable it to issue from the depths of sin and misery. The inexplicability of the process of redemption became a reason for believing in it, just because reason seems insufficient, and powerless to redeem man. It was the stumbling block of the Cross that converted Paul. Recall his sublime words: "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? Since the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 20–24). And to the Hakusakis of his day, Tertullian responds with his famous paradoxes: "Crucifixus est Dei filius; non pudet, quia pudendum est. Et mortuus est dei filius; prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est. Et sepultus resurrexit; certum est, quia impossibile est."[1]

[1] Tertullian., *De Carne Chr.*, 5, 898.

Julian, who grew up in a *milieu* in which Christianity exercised no influence, found little difficulty in pointing out the doctrinal and historical contradictions of the Christian traditions. And as he was not rendered immune by the antidote of faith, these contradictions were for him an evident proof of the weakness of Christianity, and he deceived himself by supposing that it was only necessary to point these things out for Christianity to be overthrown; but he did not understand that all the criticisms hurled against the rock of faith would not even succeed in grazing it. Religious criticism only takes root when scientific thought has removed, or at least attenuated, the necessity of possessing a positive religion, as is the case with the man of to-day. But nothing was further from the time and intellectual habits of Julian than scientific thought. This is so true that, although he attempted to destroy Christianity by means of criticism, he endeavoured to put in its place a religion that could not for an instant have resisted the assault of those same arms.

Julian, therefore, being entirely free from all predispositions favourable to Christianity, prepared to play against it the part of a destructive critic. He composed a treatise against the Christians, in which he discussed the reasons of Christianity from an historical and philosophical point of view, and sought to prove its essential weakness. This treatise was completely lost, as

were those of Celsus and Porphyry, written with the same aim. These books must have exasperated the Christians to such an extent that they would not permit them to be preserved; their destruction was the natural consequence of a very explicable intolerance. However, of Julian's treatise, as also of that of Celsus, we are able to find sufficient traces to give us an idea of their work. Celsus as well as Julian had powerful refuters. The first was discussed and refuted by Origen, the second by Cyril of Alexandria towards the middle of the fifth century. Now, from the text of the confutations, it is possible to reconstruct at least in part the treatise confuted. Theodor Keim has done this work for the treatise of Celsus, and Neumann has done the same for that of Julian, with one of those marvellous efforts of criticism that are only rendered possible by modern erudition. But, unfortunately, of Cyril's own work, which consisted of about twenty books, only ten remain, and these are entirely dedicated to the confutation of the first book of Julian's treatise, of which it appears there were three. It is, therefore, only a fragment that Neumann has succeeded in reconstructing. But this fragment is precious, and sufficient to give us an idea of the polemical intentions of its author.

From what Libanius relates, in his Funeral Oration, the treatise against the Christians must

have been written during the sojourn of the Emperor in Antioch. We know that Julian remained in Antioch from the August of 362 to the March of 363, wholly intent on his preparations for his unfortunate campaign against the Persians. And, in the midst of these grave preoccupations, the enthusiastic youth, so Libanius tells us, taking advantage of the long winter nights, wrote this book to demonstrate that the Christian faith was vain and ridiculous — a book which, according to Libanius, was more potent even than that dictated by "the old Tyrian" (*i.e.* Porphyry) on the same subject.[1] Certainly the circumstance of having written, in a critical moment, such a ponderous work, and of being able, at the same time, to compose such a brilliant satire as the *Misopogon*, is the most evident proof of Julian's singular versatility, and of his profound knowledge of the Old and New Testaments. Even should we admit with Libanius that Julian's treatise was more erudite than that of Porphyry, it appears more than probable that the latter's treatise had a most profound influence on his successor, for whom all the teachings and every word of his Neo-Platonic masters were sacred. To us it seems incredible that, without Porphyry's book to serve him as a guide, Julian could have succeeded in writing his work during the few and agitated months that he remained in Antioch.

[1] Liban., *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 581, 17 sq.

As we have said, Neumann has succeeded in reconstructing from the confutation of Cyril the plan of Julian's first book. It is easy to comprehend that the work of a critic, however exact, is, for the most part, hypothetical, since it is impossible to have any precise proof either of the entirety or of the order of the quotations contained in the text of the confutation. However, the perusal of Julian's book, as it results from the reconstruction made by the critic, while leaving some doubts as to the details of the quotations, gives us a clear insight into the fundamental conception on which Julian's ideas were developed, and of the value of the arguments themselves. We also find here that suggestive mixture of acuteness of intellect and rational criticism, intermingled with the prejudice and superstition which are characteristic of Julian, and which we have already seen in his other writings. To judge, however, from the fragments we possess, this treatise against the Christians must have been one of the most elaborated of Julian's works, that in which his acuteness as a destructive critic is exercised with surety because untrammelled by philosophical and scholastical preconceptions. If Christianity could have been demolished by a critical analysis of its foundations and its documents, Julian's book would have accomplished this enterprise.

We should examine this work, not only because of its intrinsic value, but because, as an historical

document, it is of great interest, and contains the rational causes of Julian's apostasy, as explained by Julian himself. In it the Apostate makes a direct attack on Christianity. The emperors before him had fought it *ferro et igne*. He considers that the strength of his reasoning would be sufficient. Certainly, in some points, he neither lacks acumen nor erudition. But a truly impartial and intelligent judge, on reading Julian's criticisms, might very well say: "Medice, cura te ipsum."

The book begins thus: "It seems to me just to explain to all men the reason why I am convinced that the foolish doctrine of the Galileans is an invention devised by human perversity. Not having in itself anything divine, and taking advantage of the inclination of the soul towards that which is mystical, childish, and irrational, it has succeeded in making its preposterous fables pass as true.

. . . . . .

"It is worth our while to examine briefly whence and how we receive our first idea of God. Then we must compare what is said concerning God by the Greeks and the Jews, and afterwards interrogate those who are neither Greeks nor Jews, but belong to the heresy of the Galileans, as to the reason why they prefer to ours the doctrine of the Jews, and why, instead of remaining firm in that doctrine, they forsook it to follow one of their own. Not accepting any of that which we Greeks

have of the beautiful and good, and none of that which the Jews received from Moses, they took, as if attacked by some wicked demon, the vices of both; the impiety of Jewish intolerance, and our vicious and shameful habits of levity and intemperance, and then dare to call all this 'the perfect religion.'"[1]

In this short introduction we find the two fundamental points on which all Julian's polemic hinges: first, the superiority of Hellenic polytheism over Jewish monotheism, which he considers as a false application of an essentially true principle; in the second place, the contradiction into which the Christians fall—the Galileans, as he calls them always with contemptuous intent—who, while affirming that they derive their doctrines and their ideas of the divinity from the Jewish religion, offend it in its most essential conceptions.

Julian was an able and acute debater, and knew how to take immediate advantage of the weak points of his adversary. To combat Jewish monotheism, he insists upon its peculiar fundamental defect, that is, its having a God who, by his nature, is extremely national. The God of the Jews is not the God of the human race; he is the God of a small and specified nation. Now, asks Julian, is it possible to imagine such a God as the God of all humanity? Is it possible that

[1] Neumann, *Julian. Libr. contra Christ. quæ supersunt*, p. 162.

the Creator of all mankind would limit his favours to such a trifling and unimportant minority? This argument is the keystone of all Julian's confutations. It was very easy for him to demonstrate, with the texts in his hands, that Moses intended to make his God the exclusive God of the Jews. He then continues: "This God, even from the beginning, only interested himself in the Jews, whom he made his peculiar people; not alone Moses and Jesus, but Paul also affirms it. This Paul changed his convictions concerning God, just as the polypus changes the colour of its skin according to the hue of the rocks to which it is attached, and at times sustained that only to Jews was given the divine right of election; and, again, to make proselytes of the Greeks, he tried to persuade them by saying: —God is not only the God of the Jews, but of all men, yea, of all men. But, in this case, we must ask Paul why did God accord to the Jews only the gift of prophecy, and Moses and the chrism and the Law and miracles? And, lastly, he also sends Jesus to them. To us, on the contrary, no prophet, no priest, no teacher, no ambassador of his tardy benevolence? Thus, for myriads, or, if you prefer it, for thousands of years, he does not care for all those from the East to the West, from the North to the South, who, in their ignorance, adored idols; and he only makes an exception for a little race, which, for less than

two thousand years, had inhabited Palestine. If he is God and the Creator of all, why did he neglect us? And must we admit that of this God of the universe, you alone, or only some of your race, have succeeded in forming a rational conception?"[1]

These arguments of Julian are by no means lacking in acuteness. But it is very symptomatic of the intellectual atmosphere in which Julian wrote that he did not perceive that the system which he afterwards upheld as the expression of truth was more irrational and much more puerile than that against which he fought. Neo-Platonic polytheism, issuing from the lucubrations of Iamblichus, Maximus, and the other enthusiastic successors of Plotinus, was a polytheism in the second degree. It affirmed a supreme and only God, creator of all, but, under this God, they arrayed minor gods, by whose means the creative process came to pass, and in whom Julian saw the protective divinities of the different nationalities. He had, therefore, no difficulty in recognising the God of the Jews, but he considered him one of these secondary divinities, by means of which he imagined he could explain the diversity that existed between the different races, as otherwise he could find no reason for this difference. We shall certainly not pause to prove the absolute childishness of

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 177, 7 sq.

these fantasies. But it is interesting to read at least a page of what Julian has written on this subject, and note that when the true and scientific knowledge of reality is lacking, the human mind wanders about without compass in the sea of imagination, and finds itself at once enveloped in the mist which it believed had been dissipated. "Compare"—says Julian, after confuting Jewish monotheism—"this doctrine with ours. Our teachers affirm that the Creator is the Father and the King of the universe, but that the different nations are consigned to the care of ethnic or local divinities, each of which rules over them according to its peculiar nature. While in the Father all is perfect and unique, in the partial gods the various faculties differ. Thus Mars governs the warlike people; Minerva, those who are warlike and wise at the same time; Mercury, those more prudent than daring—in a word, people led by national divinities follow the essential tendencies of each of them. Now, if experience did not confirm our doctrine, it must be an invention or a stupid deceit, and yours, instead, must be praiseworthy. But if, however, the experience of an infinite length of time proves that which we have affirmed, while nothing agrees with your ideas, why have you such a mania for dispute? Tell me, I beg of you, what are the causes that make the Celts and the Germans courageous, the Greeks and the Romans civilised

and humane, and at the same time determined and warlike in their dispositions, the Egyptians more prudent and industrious, the Syrians cowardly and effeminate, timid and light, but very apt in learning? If, for such diversities among nations, you do not wish to admit any cause, and affirm that this happens automatically, how is it ever possible for you to believe that the world is governed by Providence? But if, instead, you admit that a cause exists, explain to me how you can attribute it to a single Creator? It is clear that human nature has itself laid down the laws adapted to it, civilised and humane, wheresoever kindness dominates; rough and barbarous, according to the character of their customs. Because legislators by means of education had little influence on their primitive dispositions. . . . Why then such a difference among nations in their customs and laws?"[1]

But the difficulty that Julian encountered really exists, when we propound the argument of a willed creation with a pre-established finality. The inexplicability of the organisation of the universe when we imagine it conceived *a priori* by a conscient Will, is appreciated by Julian in all its reality. Truly acute, and original for its time, is the observation that laws do not make men, but that it is men who make the laws, that is to say that, in morality, there is nothing

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 179.

absolute; it is a phenomenon in conformity with the pre-existing conditions of men and the age. Given a creating and conscient Will, it is clear that all this is inexplicable, and admitting this Will is to fall into a net of contradictions; so men have concluded that the only way of getting out of the difficulty is to determine that it is a mystery, then shut their eyes, and swallow it. But Julian was not willing to content himself with explanations that explained nothing, and therefore he sought one that was, or at least appeared, satisfactory to him. But as the difficulty is absolutely insuperable, because the anthropomorphic conception of divinity, which obliges one to seek the reason of creation, is also that which prevents us from finding one that is reasonable, so he was necessarily forced to content himself with an explanation so puerile that it was the most evident proof of the complete exhaustion in which polytheism had ended.

The origin of these Neo-Platonic divagations is to be found in the *Timæus* of Plato. Julian, in his treatise, does not fail to compare the Platonic cosmology with that of Moses, in order to prove the greater reasonableness of the creation by means of grades and divine hierarchies, as proposed by Plato, than that of the creation by the direct act of a single Creator; and it is evident that his theory of ethnic and local divinities is a variation on the Platonic theme. Julian having established, according to his views, the position of Hebraic

monotheism in comparison with Hellenic polytheism, and demonstrated the error of the Jews in considering as a sole and supreme God him who was no other than a secondary and partial God, the controversialist proceeds to develop the second of his fundamental conceptions, and attempts to prove the folly of the Christians who could not remain united either with the Jews or the Greeks, and the untenability of their pretence of being derived from a religion of which their doctrine is the most open negation. "You are like leeches"—says Julian to the Christians— "you have sucked from all sides the infected blood, and have left the pure. . . . You imitate the Jews in their anger and hate, you destroy the temples and the altars, and murder, not only those who remain faithful to the laws of their country, but even those heretics who profess errors similar to yours in their lachrymose adoration of the dead,[1] but do not profess all your rites. And all this is your work, since neither Jesus nor Paul ever commanded it. And the reason of this is that they never hoped to arrive at such a degree of power. They were well pleased when they could deceive some maid-servant or slave, who, in their turn, deceived men and women of the importance of Cornelius or Sergius. If among these only one name of illustrious persons of the epoch occurs, I will simply say that I am in all things a liar."[2]

[1] Meaning Jesus dead and buried. [2] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 199.

But if the Christians only had remained faithful to the Jewish doctrine! No, affirms Julian, they went farther from this doctrine than from ours. Christian impiety is composed of Jewish arrogance and Hellenic levity. Taking from each part, not the good but the evil, they have woven unto themselves a garment of vices. "To tell the truth, you have been pleased to exaggerate our unworthiness, and have believed it best to adapt your habits to those of men most despicable, such as merchants, tax-gatherers, ballet-dancers, and panders."[1]

Who could ever suppose, *a priori*, that the Christian religion, which had its *raison d'être* in a reaction against the immorality of the Græco-Roman world, would, in three centuries, become more immoral than those whom they desired to correct, so that the Pagan disputant could attack it in the name of offended morality? There is no stronger argument to illustrate the fact that morality is not an extrinsic element introduced to man from without, but rather the product of his whole intrinsic being. Christianity appeared as a moral force in its early days because the Christians, during the persecutions, represented the selected few. When victorious Christianity became general, it was obliged to adapt itself to the *milieu* of the epoch, and it became corrupt. It is not Christianity that made society moral, but society that corrupted Christianity.

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 208.

"But," continues Julian, insisting on the difference existing between the Christians and the Jews, "the Christians admit being different from the contemporary Jews, but affirm that they are severely Jewish according to the precepts promulgated by the prophets, and according to those of Moses." And Julian here enters into a discussion that proves the exact and minute knowledge which he possessed of Jewish literature. He affirms, on the testimony of the texts, that Moses could not have predicted the coming of Jesus, from the moment that he only absolutely admitted a unique and indivisible God. He spoke of prophets, of angels, of kings, but never of a God who should descend on earth. Julian surprises the Christians in contradiction, where, to agree with Moses, they make Jesus descend from David, and at the same time say that he was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. For this purpose they have invented the Davidic genealogy of Jesus, but they were unfortunately unable to make the two Gospels that present it agree. And if the Christians should ever pretend to believe in one only God, they would openly contradict the Gospel of John, which, by no possible art of interpretation, could be made to tally with the Mosaic texts.[1]

But, even in regard to worship and sacrifices, the Christians separate themselves from the Jews not less than from the Greeks. In fact, according

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 213.

to Julian, Moses established in Leviticus a procedure of sacrifice that was in no way different from that of the Greeks. And even if it is a fact—which Julian affirms not to be the case—that the Jews no longer offer sacrifice, this would be entirely due to the circumstance that there no longer exists the Temple of Jerusalem, which was the only place where they could practise the solemn rite. But the Christians, to whom there was no connection between the rites and a determined locality, have no excuse for not practising the prescribed ceremonies. The truth is that the Jews, with the exception of their belief in the "oneness" of God, are in all points in conformity with the Greeks, while the Christians refuse to unite with the one or the other. Not admitting the form of worship in which both the Greeks and the Jews agree, not recognising the infinite plurality of Hellenic polytheism, and not even the Jewish monotheism, they affirm a divine Trinity.[1]

In all this argument it is clear that Julian, when he wishes to demonstrate that the Christians are wrong in not sacrificing like the Greeks and the Jews, is a narrow-minded and pedantic wrangler; but when he affirms that the Christians with their divine Trinity offend at the same time the broad polytheism of the Greeks and the severe monotheism of the Jews, and place themselves in a position rationally unsustainable, he is — apparently, at

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 216 sq.

least—in the right. And he is so much in the right that we see that the doctrine of the Trinity was only accepted with great repugnance by those who held fast to the premises of monotheism, and that it was the firebrand which caused the terrible strife which from the third to the fifth century divided nascent Christianity into numerous factions, and, in the end, was accepted only in the form of an inscrutable mystery.

Then Julian goes on to say that the Christians, by affirming that the Jewish law could be perfected, put themselves in open contradiction with the writings of Moses, so that the pretence of seeing in the religion of Israel the origin and base of Christianity is wholly untenable. But this is not all. For the Christians, not content with putting themselves in opposition to the Jews from whom they say they have issued, even contradict themselves, since in the Gospels, says Julian, there are affirmations irreconcilable with each other, and the doctrine of the Logos incarnated in Christ, representing a divine Person, is only the invention of John, and it is impossible to find it in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. This argument is conducted in such a manner as to prove that the Imperial disputant was well acquainted with Christian literature, and, if he had not been so intensely blinded by hate, we might almost trace in him a method foreshadowing modern criticism.[1]

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 221 sq.

But there is certainly no vestige of this in his invectives against the Christians for their worship among the sepulchres. They are not content, Julian says, to adore the dead Jesus, they also wish to worship those who died after him, and they have encumbered every place with tombs and monuments, although none of their books say that they must wander around among the sepulchres and adore them. In these words Julian alludes to the cult that the Christians professed for their martyrs, to whom they raised sanctuaries over the ruins of the abandoned or destroyed temples. This special cult was most irritating to him, and the reason of this irritation was perhaps due, in part, to an æsthetic sentiment and, still more, to the great influence that it exercised on the imagination of the believers. With pedantic cavilling he, therefore, attempts to prove that this cult was not approved by Jesus, who employed the term "sepulchre" as if to him it was associated with all that was unclean, and affirms that the Christians honoured the sepulchres only to draw from them a magic power.[1]

But the Christians do those things that God and Moses and the prophets reprove, and then refuse to sacrifice on the altars, when the episode of Cain and Abel, rightly interpreted, should persuade them that God is gratified with the sacrifice of live offerings. And why do not the Christians circumcise themselves? Paul speaks of

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 225.

the circumcision of the heart. But the command of God in Genesis is too explicit to be eluded without breaking the law, and Jesus declared that he came not to alter the law but to fulfil it. "Ah! you say that you circumcise the heart!"—Julian exclaims with bitter irony—"And you are right, because amongst you it is easy to see that there exist none who are wicked or vile! Admirable, in truth, is your circumcision of the heart! . . . The fact is that the Christians openly disobey the precepts of their master."[1]

Julian finishes the first book of his treatise, the only one of which something is preserved, by returning to the subject of the harmony, according to him, existing between Hellenic polytheism and Hebraic monotheism, the exact identity of rites and of forms of sacrifice, and the similarity of prophecies in the two religions. He illustrates this affirmation by the story of Abraham, with the processes of interpretation by which the patriarch succeeded in comprehending the promises of God, and the celestial signs which assured him of their accomplishment, and finds that all this has a great analogy with the processes of soothsaying, and that it is a great wrong in the Christians to have abandoned it. Julian here, again, gives proof of the singular knowledge he has of Biblical literature and of an acute mind well trained in purely formal logic. But here is also evident the absolute lack of

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 228 sq.

positive science and the frightful superstition of those reformers of polytheism. It is indeed sad to see a hero like Julian,—a man of marvellous intellectual versatility, who succeeds in writing a treatise such as this, replete with theological erudition, in the midst of the preoccupations of a gigantic war which he is personally conducting,—a victim to such miserable prejudices, and capable of putting faith in the exercise of foolish rites, bloody sacrifices, and meteoric signs ; and this man finishes by saying: "The truth cannot be recognised by words alone ; it is necessary that the words be followed by an efficacious sign, which, by its apparition, guarantees the future accomplishment of the prediction." [1]

Here indeed is an enormous deterioration in comparison with Marcus Aurelius, the Stoics, Plato, and, in fact, all the Greek philosophers. The cause of this is entirely due to the influence of Neo-Platonism, which had introduced the super-rational and the supernatural in the place of the nature-gods of ancient polytheism, and imposed them as an incubus on the world and nature, without being able to incarnate them in a supremely moral being as Christianity had done. Thus it happened that the supernatural, reviving, for an instant, with an artificial breath the nature-gods of

[1] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 232. *τὴν δὲ ἀλήθειαν οὐκ ἔνεστιν ἰδεῖν ἐκ ψιλοῦ ῥήματος, ἀλλὰ χρή τι καὶ παρακολουθῆσαι τοῖς λόγοις ἐναργες σημεῖον, ὅ πιστώσεται γενόμενον τὴν εἰς τὸ μέλλον πεποιημένην προαγόρευσιν.*

the ancient world, rendered their action more intense in every moment of life, and thus superstition became the keystone of the religious arch. Even Christianity was not able to keep itself free from superstition, and fell a victim to its baleful supremacy until the dawn of positive science was able to liberate it partly from its fearful influence. Although dimmed, the moral ideality of a divine figure such as that of Jesus served as a remedy to revive the spirits weakened by error and foolish fears. In the time of Julian, Christianity might have been considered as a reaction against the folly of polytheistic superstition. When we pass from the supernatural of Julian to that of Ambrose and Augustine, we are conscious of a great relief, and we can understand how the attempt to restore polytheism had not the slightest probability of success, however much it might have been justified and ennobled by the love of Hellenic culture.[1]

[1] A small fragment of Julian's treatise not comprised in those confuted by Cyril has just been published by two Belgian *savants*, Mm. Bidez and Cumont, in their Essay — ***Sur la Tradition Manuscrite des Lettres de Julien***—which should serve as an introduction to a truly critical edition of the letters of the Emperor, which is, undoubtedly, very much needed. This piece was discovered in a fragment of a confutation that Aretas, Bishop of Cæsarea in the tenth century, had written of Julian's treatise; this fragment was found in a library at Moscow. With this text, Neumann (*Theol. Liter. Zeitung*, 1899) succeeded in reconstructing the passage of Julian which probably belonged to the second book of the latter's treatise. The few lines are interesting as a proof of the subtlety of the debater, who, recording the affirmation of the Gospel of John that the Logos came to take away sin from the world, compares this with the disorder and discord caused by the introduction of Christianity—a dis-

We cannot possibly compare Julian's treatise with that of Porphyry, which, as we have already said, was lost; but we may compare it with the treatise of Celsus, or at least that part of it which was preserved to us in Origen's confutation, for which Theodore Keim has done the same work of reconstruction as Neumann did later for the writings of Julian, by means of the confutation of Cyril.[1]

These two philosophical attacks against Christianity, written at the distance of two centuries from each other (since the work of Celsus belongs to the last years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius), prove that the basis of the polemic remained ever the same. It is always the Platonic philosophy that sees in polytheism an explanation much broader and truer of the fundamental ideas of divinity and the world than those contained in the narrow monotheism of the Jews and Christians. It is always the accusation made against the Christians of having separated themselves from the Jews, from whom they pretend to descend; always the same demonstration of the impossibility of accepting those legends on which Christianity is founded. However, in the two centuries which elapsed between the life of Celsus and that of Julian, the Greek spirit, deprived as it was of the mainstay

order and discord already foreseen by the synoptic Gospels, thus tending to injure the divinity of the Logos, and to place the Fourth Gospel in contradiction to the other three.

[1] T. Keim, *Celsus Wahres Wort*, 1893.

of objective knowledge and of scientific research, launched itself, with all sails set, on the boundless ocean of mysticism, and constituted, as we have seen, in Neo-Platonism a religious philosophy, based on an overpowering conception of the supernatural. The philosophical difference, therefore, between Julian and Celsus is that the former went much farther than the latter in the symbolical interpretations of polytheism, and possessed a mystical dogmatic theology that his predecessor lacked. And again, in Julian's time, the canons of the New Testament were thoroughly established and in constant use, while, in the time of Celsus, they were not known, or, at least, were just beginning to be introduced, and this naturally gave Julian a greater knowledge of the sources of Christianity, and enabled him to use the Fourth Gospel to prove the contradiction of those sources, an opportunity that Celsus did not possess, or, at least, did not use. Besides, we must add that Julian, educated in Christianity, possessed an intimate knowledge, not only of the New, but also of the Old Testament, and could employ it in his polemics with an abundance and boldness of quotation which certainly could not be expected of Celsus, whose attention was devoted to other studies, and who, after all, combated Christianity, considering it only as a contemptible stupidity, and not appreciating its menace. The work of Celsus is that of a scholar who diverts himself in his con-

futation; Julian's, instead, is that of a disputant fighting for life. But Celsus possessed a philosophical mind, much broader and much more original than that of Julian, and if the latter is superior in his arguments based on the hermeneutics of the texts, the former is greatly the superior in his intuitive judgment of great speculations, to say nothing of his never having displayed that frightful superstition which is the greatest blot on Julian and his Neo-Platonic polytheism. Celsus considered Christianity as a doctrine that endowed a figure, unworthy of the honour, with the ancient and worn-out myth of the deification of a man. He affirms that the idea of a redemption taking place at a certain period of history does not harmonise with divine love and justice, which could not be restricted to such a limited result. Celsus opposes to the theology of salvation the immutable and eternal laws of nature, in which evil and sin inherent in matter have their necessary place, and man is, by no means, the *raison d'être* of the world. In this negation of the anthropocentric position of man, and of the anthropomorphic essence of the divinity, Celsus may almost be said to be a precursor of modern thought. He expresses himself as follows: "The universe is not made for man any more than it is made for lions, for eagles, or for dolphins; but all contribute to render this world, as the work of God, perfect and com-

plete in every part. Therefore it is not decreed that one part should have the mastery over another, but that it should be a complex creation: in short, the universe. God is in the universe, and Providence has never abandoned it, and the universe has never become worse, and God, through all time, has never retired within himself, and is never irritated because of men, as he is never irritated by monkeys or by flies. And he never threatens beings, the fate of each one having been especially predestined."[1]

Here is a page that Julian, with his supernatural anthropomorphism, would never have written. Neither could he have written that profound phrase of Celsus, who, after having alluded to the strange and incredible deifications that had been effected among the most diverse nations, of men living in the midst of them,—deifications similar to those with which the Christians honoured Jesus,—exclaims: "Such is the power of faith, whatever the faith may be, provided we are previously imbued with it."[2] In this phrase we have the key to the history of all religions, which Celsus undoubtedly divined, but the importance of which he did not fully appreciate.

We have now seen how Julian sought to overthrow Christianity by revealing the weakness of

[1] Keim, *op. cit.*, 63.

[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, 39. Τοσοῦτον ποιεῖ ἡ πίστις ὁποία δὴ προκατασχοῦσα.

its historical basis and the contradictions into which it had fallen concerning the premises from which it claimed to have descended. But if Julian had confined himself to this negative work, his attempt would not have differed very much from those which had already been made by Celsus, Porphyry, and others who still remain unknown. Julian, however, wished to do something more. He wished to reinstate ancient polytheism, which for him represented Hellenism, civilisation, and Hellenic culture, in opposition to the new Christianity that threatened to destroy it; but to reinstate it, he wished to Christianise it both in its morals and its ecclesiastical constitution. He felt the necessity of reanimating society with a new spirit, and he desired to infuse it in the old form, in the downfall of which he saw the destruction of civilisation. In this lay the origin of the movement attempted by Julian. This bitter enemy of Christianity made a propaganda of all the virtues taught by Christianity—temperance, respect for sacred things, love of our neighbour, contempt for riches, interest in spiritual things, and, above all, charity. Christianity had so little succeeded in infusing these virtues in the Lower Empire that, on becoming its official religion, it had been obliged to renounce them, but at the same time it had created monachism as a sort of hothouse in which these virtues were preserved under the zealous care of a rigorous asceticism. Julian pretended to remodel the work of Christianity by means of poly-

theism, on which he wished to impose the duty of rendering society moral. He fell into the error common to all religious and moral reformers, *i.e.*, of believing that a society, like an individual, can be rendered moral by means of teaching and preaching. Moralisation can only be the consequence of a determined intellectual atmosphere, by which the individual or the society happens to be surrounded. It was not the Reformation that rendered the German people moral, but the Reformation was itself the effect of a pre-existing disposition in the character and in the habits of the German people, who were animated by a sentiment of human dignity that was entirely extinct in the Latin race. This is why Christianity did not succeed in reforming the world, because the world not being prepared for its great principle of human solidarity, its action simply shook the basis of civilisation. Julian wished to save polytheism in order to save Hellenic civilisation, and notwithstanding his hatred of Christianity, in which he saw the bitter enemy of this civilisation, he desired to Christianise polytheism so as to make of it an instrument of moral regeneration. The unreasonableness of the undertaking should not cause us to lose sight of the nobility of the illusions in which Julian lived, and the magnitude of the goal at which he aimed with all the power of his versatile talent.

Julian's practical intentions in regard to his Christianised polytheism are revealed in three important documents: the long fragment of a letter

to an unknown person;[1] the letter to Arsacius, High Priest of Galatia;[2] and the fragment of a letter to Theodore to invest him with a high sacerdotal office.[3] This last fragment, we believe, may possibly be united with the first, so as to form a complete whole, with only one brief interruption. We must examine them with attention, because they contain the most curious part of Julian's reforms. And here we shall witness a strange phenomenon: a heroic leader, a fearless adventurer, who interests himself in the most minute details of ecclestiastical organisation, and writes "pastorals" in a manner that proves how seriously he was impressed with his mission as a religious reformer. The reason is that Julian put into everything he did a singular gravity and objectivity of purpose. Napoleon, who in the midst of the preoccupations of his sojourn in Moscow prepares the regulations of the "Théatre Français," is certainly an example of marvellous versatility. But Napoleon was a colossal egoist. Nothing interested him except it referred to himself, or to his own sovereignty. He had but one ideal, himself, and his intelligence was an instrument that he only employed for his own benefit. But Julian was altogether another sort of man. He had created for himself a mission in the world, and to fulfil it was for him the most imperious of duties. All his peculiar versatility of mind was applied

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 371, 392.
[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, 552, 555.
[3] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, 585, 588.

to this ideal aim. In Julian the practical man was admirable, but this practical man was always under the sway of the fervent idealist. It is this combination that presents the figure of the young Emperor in a strange and, we might almost say, enigmatic light.

The fragment of the letter to the High Priest proves that Julian desired to have a pagan priesthood which would realise that ideal of virtue that the Christian clergy placed before the eyes of all, even if they did not attempt to follow it.

At the beginning of this fragment, we find a violent and cruelly ironic allusion to the Christians. "Over those who do not venerate the gods there rules a species of evil demons by which many of these impious ones are rendered insane, so that they seek to die, as if they were certain to fly directly to heaven, when their lives have been taken by violence. Others inhabit the deserts instead of the cities, notwithstanding that man is by nature a social and domestic animal, and these men are likewise dominated by evil demons who force them into this misanthropy. And these impious beings abandon themselves voluntarily to these demons, and rebel against the eternal and beneficent gods." Behold, this is how Julian judged the martyrs and the hermits who really represented the Christian ideal in all its force and purity. And such was the case, because that idea was in marked contrast to the fundamental conceptions of ancient thought and

civilisation. Christianity had for its starting-point its abhorrence of the present and transitory world, in order to attain the conquest of the world supernatural and eternal. And it is because of this that the true Christian professed the abandonment and renunciation of the things of this world, and longed for death to free him from the taint of earthly life, and hasten the attainment of his promised felicity. And for this reason, the genuine Christian, the Christian of the earlier days, rushed to encounter martyrdom; and it is because of this that, when Christianity became powerful and entered into the social organism, and, yielding to the necessities of life, became corrupt, there immediately arose a reaction against this fatal movement, and monachism arose, representing, in its origin, the complete renunciation of all compromise with social conventions, and preserving intact the original principles of Christianity. Now the man of ancient times, for whom the present was the only reality, and who could not appreciate the ideas of another life otherwise than as dreams and phantoms, failed to understand this principle, which was really the very essence of Christianity, but which appeared to him as an absolute perversion of judgment, a madness fatal to the social order, and in opposition to the nature and end of man. And Julian, who was naught else than a man of ancient times, a pure Greek, could not but feel a cordial antipathy to the pessimistic tendencies of the

genuine Christian spirit, and considered as equally dangerous and furious maniacs both the martyrs, who in his time no longer existed, as well as the hermits and monks who, in the name of Christ, then began to populate the deserts of the East.

Having given vent to his indignation against the Christians, Julian proceeds in his recommendations to the priests. They should give examples of obedience to the divine law; from this example men will learn to obey the laws of the State. According to Julian, the first duty of a priest is to be charitable. And here we may imagine that we are listening to the words of a good Christian. There is a kind of unction in his discourse that reveals an influence wholly ignored in genuine antiquity. The gods, says Julian, give continual proof of their love for men. And should not men love and assist each other? It is customary to accuse the gods of the misery that is seen in the world. But if those who possessed, gave to others in proportion to their substance, there would be no more misery. He (Julian) was always happy to do all the good that lay in his power, and found it an advantage even to himself. And to those who might observe that it was easy for him, an emperor, to give these counsels, he recalls that he also was once poor, and that he had given to those in need to the extent of his small possessions. And here he utters the following words that are not only Christian, but we may truly say

evangelical, and which may easily be attributed to Jesus, although due to his most bitter enemy. "We should render our possessions common to all men, more liberally to the good, and then to all the miserable, and to all according to their necessities. And I will also add, although it may seem a paradox, that it is a blessed thing to give food and clothing even unto our enemies, because we give to the man, and not to the character."[1] And he continues in words almost more beautiful: "And I believe that we should show such charity also to those who are in prison. For this love to our neighbour is no obstacle to justice. Among the many shut up in prison, some must be guilty and some innocent. Now, that which we should fear is not the possibility of doing kindness to the guilty in our efforts to help the innocent, but rather of being without pity for the innocent, fearing that we might benefit the guilty." Gems such as these, which seem to have been taken from the undefiled evangelical mine, are to be found in all Julian's works. Thus he says: "For me it seems, in every respect, better to save one wicked person with a thousand good ones than to neglect one thousand good, because of one who is evil."[2] And in another place: "What hecatombs can equal holiness, of which the divine Euripides sang,

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 374. *φαίην δ' ἄν, εἰ καὶ παράδοξον εἰπεῖν, ὅτι καὶ τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐσθῆτος καὶ τρυφῆς ὅσιον ἂν εἴη μεταδιδόναι Τῷ γὰρ ἀνθρωπίνῳ καὶ οὐ τῷ τρόπῳ δίδομεν.*

[2] Neumann, *op. cit.*, 191.

invoking her: 'Holiness, Holiness, thou venerable mother! Dost thou not know that all things, great or small, offered to the gods in a spirit of holiness, have the same efficacy, and that, without this spirit, not only the sacrifice of a hundred oxen, but even of a thousand, are but a foolish waste?'"[1] Admirable words, especially admirable when proceeding from an emperor, but, notwithstanding, they remained without effect. Why is it that words analogous to these, or at least inspired by an analogous sentiment, were able, when issuing from the mouth of Jesus, to create a revolution in the world? Why did the humble and untutored teacher of Galilee stir up mankind, and the powerful emperor speak to the wind? For no other reason except that to change the direction of the human mind, to make piety a duty, and to give, at least for an instant, a victory to the weak over the strong, it needed the apparition of a God, who by his example and his person could illustrate his teachings. Julian's error lies in the fact that he did not possess the strength to accomplish this moral reformation which was the chief object of his existence. A God alone could make it succeed. But the gods of the pagans were completely exhausted, and void of all reality. A new God was needed. It is true that the acceptation of this God would have carried with it the ruin of that precious treasure, Hellenism. But it was an inevitable sacrifice.

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 277.

To renew Hellenism was to deprive it of its *raison d'être.*

Julian presents yet another argument to sustain his propaganda of charity: and this is the unity of the human race, through which all men are brothers.[1] He then proceeds to recommend the veneration and worship of the images of the divinity, basing his ideas on the necessity that man, as a corporeal creature, feels of representing, in a material form, even spiritual beings.[2] Here Julian enters into a long and subtle argument directed especially against the objections of the Jewish prophets to the worship of idols, pretending to demonstrate its unreasonableness on account of the destructibility of the idol itself. But, then, Julian very appropriately exclaims, what have the Jewish prophets to say about their temple which was three times destroyed, and which, even to-day, is not rebuilt? And Julian, in his war against the Christians, who had become numerous and powerful, favoured the Jews, now few and harmless, believing to find in them his natural allies, and he observes that he does not say this to offend the Jews. On the contrary, he has seriously considered the reconstruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in honour of the God whom they there adored. He makes use of this example only to prove to the

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 375. *ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ ἐκὼν καὶ ἄκων πᾶς ἐστί συγγενὴς.*

[2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, 377.

Jews that everything created by man must perish, and that, therefore, the objection of their prophets is vain. And Julian, always with the intention of ingratiating himself with the Jews, says that the errors of the prophets are worthy of foolish old women, but that this does not in any way detract from the greatness of thei: God, because a great God may have incapable interpreters. And such were the prophets and priests of the Jews, who did not know how to purify their souls with the doctrine by which they were surrounded, or to open their drowsy eyes, or to dissipate the mist that enfolded them, amidst which the pure light of truth appeared as something indistinct and terrible. "Oh!" exclaims Julian, "how inferior to our poets are these teachers of the science of God!"[1]

"But," continues Julian, "it is not sufficient to honour the temples and the images of the gods; it is necessary to care for the dignity and well-being of the priests who pray and sacrifice for us, and are our interpreters with the gods. But if the position of priest is sufficient to command the respect of man, it imposes special duties on those who hold it. What are these duties? A priest should lead an exemplary life, a life that, in all respects, must be a model to other men. He should, in the first place, honour and serve the gods, as if the gods were present, and not only could see him, but penetrate with their glance, more

[1] Julian., *op cit.*, 379 sq.

piercing than any ray of light, into the innermost recesses of his soul. The priest should neither say nor listen to anything that is obscene; it is not sufficient that he should refrain from impious actions, but he must also refrain from listening to or repeating conversations concerning them. He should never read licentious authors, and should specially avoid the ancient comic authors. He should keep to the philosophers, selecting those who are imbued with respect for the gods, namely, Plato, Aristotle, Chrysippus, and Zeno.[1] And even from these take only the teachings that refer to the nature of the gods, leaving aside all those fables, invented by the poets, in which the gods appear to hate each other, and fight among themselves—fables which have caused so much prejudice to the poets themselves, and by which first the Jews, and afterwards the miserable Galileans, have so ably profited." And Julian insists, with great energy, on the importance of choosing well what the priest may read. "From what we read there develops in the soul a certain inclination, and from this, little by little, desires are born, and then suddenly a great flame breaks forth, against which we must be previously prepared."

Among the dangerous readings against which he warns them, Julian places the works of Epicurus and Pyrrho, and he thanks the gods, who have permitted a great part of their volumes to be destroyed. Nothing is more symptomatic

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 385 sq.

in Julian than this decree placing Epicurus on the Index. The principle that guided Julian, namely, his hatred of rationalism as introduced into the knowledge and interpretation of the universe, is fundamentally the same as that on which are founded the laws of the Congregation of the Index, which has its seat in the Vatican. This signifies, as we shall more clearly see at the end of this study, that the revolution intended by Julian was entirely superficial, because he shared the intellectual tendencies of his time, and opposed the scientific conception no less than the Neo-Platonic metaphysicians and the Christian theologians.

"The priest," continues the pious and rigorous Emperor, who considered seriously the office of Pontifex Maximus, "should not only abstain from discourses and books that are improper, but still more from thoughts of evil, because it is the thought that guides the tongue. He should be familiar with all the hymns in honour of the gods, pray, publicly and privately, three times a day, or, at least, at sunrise and at sunset. During his period of service, which in Rome is of thirty days' duration, he should remain in the temple, purifying himself according to the prescribed rites, never go to his own house, or into the public square, or have communication with the magistrates, except in the temple, where he must live, philosophising and serving

the gods. Having finished his period of service, and having returned to ordinary life, he can allow himself to visit a few friends, and even accept a few invitations to banquets, choosing, however, those of the most esteemed citizens. Sometimes he may also resort to the public square to confer with the magistrates and occupy himself with works of charity. When conducting divine service, the priest should be arrayed in the most gorgeous vestments, but, outside the temple, he should be clothed in the ordinary manner and unostentatiously; it would be absurd that he should use to satisfy his foolish vanity that which he receives to honour the gods. To wear sacred vestments in the midst of the people is an offence to the gods, without taking into consideration that these sacred objects become contaminated thereby."[1]

The priest should never go to the theatre. If it had been possible to bring back the theatre to the pure cult of Dionysus, Julian would have attempted it. But as this could not be done, it is necessary to abstain entirely from frequenting it. The priest should not only keep away from the theatre, but he must not make friends with any actor or dancer, or even allow them to come to his door. He might visit the sacred representations, but only those where it is forbidden to women, not only to take part, but even to be present.[2]

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 388 sq. [2] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, 390.

In the choice of the priests, the position and riches of the candidates should not be considered, but only two things are necessary, viz., that the future priest should be a lover of the gods and a lover of his neighbour. It will be a proof of his love of God if he influences all his household to the worship of the gods, and a proof of his love of his neighbour, if he, of his good will, helps the poor with the little of which he is able to dispose. And here Julian comes out with these curious and symptomatic words: "We should be very particular in the exercise of philanthropy, because here we may possibly find the remedy for our evils. As soon as they became aware that the poor were neglected by the disdainful priests, the impious Galileans craftily applied themselves to this philanthropy, and they gave merit to the vilest of their actions under the cover of charity. Like those who try to ensnare children, persuading them to follow them by offering them twice or three times cake, and afterwards, when they have succeeded in taking them away from their homes, put them in a boat and send them far away, thus, for a bit of pleasure in the present, embittering the whole of their future, in the same way these Galileans beginning with what they call the loving service of the 'agape,' force many to impiety."[1]

Here Julian's letter, as it has reached us, is

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 391.

interrupted. Probably the copyist did not care to reproduce the injurious phrases that Julian had hurled against the Christians.

To this fragment we might perhaps, as we said before, unite the other fragment that constitutes the 63rd letter in the collection of Julian's Epistles. In it, the Emperor, after having made professions of friendship to a certain Theodore, and commented on the circumstance of their having had the same master, probably Maximus, says that he wishes to confide to him an office of much importance, in which his work may be of great worth, and which would procure him much satisfaction in the present, and hopes of something better in the future. And by future, Julian means after death. He says, on this subject, that he was not one of those who believed that the soul was dissipated at the same time as the body; however, there is no certainty of this, and we should leave the care and knowledge of it to the gods alone. And he then continues :—

"But what is the office that I say I wish to entrust to thee? That of being the head of all the sacred service of Asia, of overseeing the priests of every city, and of distributing to each what is due to them. The superior, first of all, should employ kindly methods, and with these unite courtesy and friendship to all who are worthy of it. He who offends men, and is not respectful to the gods, and is overbearing with all, should be fearlessly reproved

and severely punished. Of that which it is necessary to do for the general worship thou wilt be shortly informed, together with the others. But even now I wish to tell thee something about it. And thou wilt do well to obey me. I do not speak rashly of these things, as the gods know, but am, as far as possible, prudent, avoiding novelties, I might almost say in everything, but especially in things divine, convinced as I am that it is best to remain faithful to the ancient laws, which, as it is manifest, were given by the gods. For if they had come from man they would not have been so wise. At present, however, as they have been spoilt and neglected by the prevalence of avarice and of vice, we must begin anew, and restore them to their past honour. When, therefore, I observed our great negligence of the gods, and I saw exiled, as it were, by reason of the impure and vitiated customs, the respect due unto them, I felt overcome with grief, especially when I noticed how those who follow the (Jewish) faith are so ardent in their devotion, that for it they willingly encounter death, and suffer every privation, even hunger, rather than taste the flesh of hogs or of strangled animals. And we, instead, are so negligent in all that refers to the gods as to forget the traditional habits of the country, or even ignore that they ever existed. But the Jews, who, to a certain degree, may be said to be devoted to God, as they adore a God truly powerful and beneficent, who governs the world,

and whom we also venerate, but under other names, seem to act wisely, as they refuse to transgress their laws. In one thing alone they sin, namely, in not recognising the other gods, and in venerating one alone, and in believing themselves to be the chosen among all nations, urged on, as they are, by their barbaric vanity. Those others who profess the Galilean impiety are afflicted by a malady . . ."

Here the fragment is interrupted, but it is reasonable to suppose that some phrases, now lost, united it to the text that we have previously analysed. We shall return to this fragment, when we have examined the third of these documents regarding the organisation of the Polytheistic Church, but we must note at once that we find here, in all its force, the expression of the sympathy that Julian entertained for the Jews. We have already seen, in Julian's Treatise against the Christians, the theoretic reasons with which he explains his sentiments. But here we find yet another reason, and it is the strangely conservative and traditional tendency of the Jews, displayed, above all, in their religion. Now Julian, although he was in the essence of his action a reformer, because his polytheism was a creed quite different from the naturalistic polytheism of primitive times, and also from the national polytheism of Athens and Rome, was, with regard to form, a rigid conservative. He wished to retain intact all the external structure of Hellenic civilisation, and nothing in Christianity

was more odious to him than the design of overturning everything in the organism of the human spirit. The protection of, and sympathy for, the Jews was an important card in Julian's game against Christianity, and he used it with singular ability. Really there was not a race that hated polytheism more than did the Jews. But they hated the Christians with a deeper hate still, so they became most precious allies to Julian. The restoration of the worship of Jehovah in Jerusalem would not have interfered, in the slightest, with his propaganda, but it would have been a serious blow to the Christians, who pretended to be the "heirs" of Judaism. Besides, Jehovah was a localised God. Notwithstanding that the Jews of the Roman and Hellenic epochs had tried to extend his dominion and adoration all over the world, this God had his sanctuary in Jerusalem, and remained that which he had ever been, the God of a peculiar people. Now, a localised God did not cause Julian any anxiety, because in the localisation was implied the possibility of other gods among other nations and in other sanctuaries.

The most extraordinary document of Julian's policy towards the Jews is the manifesto directed to that people, at the moment in which he was about to set out on his expedition against Persia. We shall give it here in its integrity, because it is one of those writings that is most typical of the keen ability of this mystical enthusiast, of this heroic adventurer.

Julian to the Jewish People

"Obedience to unpublished decrees, and the payment of untold sums of gold into the Imperial treasury, has become for you still more burdensome than the yoke of your ancient servitude. I have witnessed this with mine own eyes, but it has been more fully demonstrated to me by the tax-roll that is kept by us. For this I diminished all new taxes put to your charge, and I forcibly put an end to the inconvenience of similar abuse, by giving to the flames the roll concerning you which was preserved in our treasury, so that it will become impossible hereafter to torment you with such iniquitous injustice. Of all this my cousin Constantius, of worthy memory, was not so guilty as those, barbarians in intention and evil in mind, who sat at his table, and whom I, taking in hand, have annihilated, hurling them to Erebus, so that even the memory of their wickedness shall be blotted out. Furthermore, I wish to exhort your venerable Patriarch, Julius, to put an end to that tax which you call 'apostolic,' and not to permit any one to torment the people by the exaction of a similar tribute. Thus my reign will be for you entirely free of care, and, enjoying peace, you will raise on high the most fervent prayers for my reign, to God the highest, and the Creator who has deigned to crown me with his immaculate right hand. For it sometimes happens that those who

are absorbed in some care have their minds distracted, and do not think of raising towards heaven supplicating hands. Those, instead, who are free from care are happy to raise, with all their hearts, prayers and supplications for the good of the Emperor to the great and omnipotent God that he may direct our reign in the path of perfection, as we desire. This you should do, so that, as soon as I have brought the war against the Persians to a successful end, I may be able to rebuild, by my efforts, the holy city of Jerusalem, which you have founded, and, for so many years, have desired to see, and in which, together with you, to pay homage unto the Omnipotent."[1]

And now let us return to the "pastorals" of Julian. Of singular importance, because of the information it contains concerning his intentions, is the letter addressed by him to Arsacius, High Priest of Galatia. It runs as follows :—

"Hellenism does not influence the world as it should, by the fault of those individuals who follow it. However, the situation, so far as the gods are concerned, is more splendid and extraordinary than could be expected, since who would have dared to hope for so many and so important conversions? But we must not believe this to be sufficient, and close our eyes to the fact that the progress of the impious has been greatly assisted by their kindliness

[1] Julian., *ob. cit.*, 512.

to guests, their care of the sepulchres, and an ostentatious sanctity of life. It is most necessary, therefore, that we should take all this to heart. And it is not enough that thou shouldst do it, but all the priests of Galatia must do likewise. Thou shouldst reprove or persuade them to be zealous, or else expel them from the divine service, if they do not lead back to the gods their wives, children and servants, and if they tolerate that servants, children and wives do not venerate the gods but prefer atheism to piety. Furthermore, exhort the priests not to frequent theatres, not to drink in taverns, and not to devote themselves to any art or occupation that is either reprovable or wicked. Honour the obedient, and expel the intractable. Establish in all cities a number of hospices where travellers may profit by our philanthropy, and not only those that are of us but any others who may have need of assistance. I will see that thou be furnished with the means of accomplishing this. I have arranged that each year Galatia shall receive thirty thousand bushels of grain and sixty thousand gallons of wine. A fifth of all this must be given to the poor who assist at the service of the temples, the rest to the guests and to those who ask to be maintained by us. For it is shameful that among the Jews none should ask for help, and the impious Galileans should feed together with their poor also ours, so that these appear to be deprived of all assistance from us. Therefore exhort the Hellenists

to contribute to this service, and the Greek villages to offer to the gods the first-fruits. Strive to accustom the Hellenists to these contributions, teaching them that such was done in ancient times. In fact, Homer makes Eumenes say that 'from Jupiter come the guests and the poor.' As this is the case, we must not permit others to surpass us in virtues that are ours; we should be ashamed of our slothfulness, and ever increase in our respect towards the gods. If I hear that thou doest these things, I shall be happy.

"Go very seldom to visit the magistrates in their houses. It is generally best to communicate with them by means of letters. When they enter the town, no priest should go out to meet them, and if they present themselves at the temples, the meeting must take place in the atrium. No soldiers must precede them in the temples. All can follow, as from the moment the magistrate touches the threshold of the temple, he is the same as any other individual. 'Thou alone, as thou art aware, commandest in the interior of the temples; this in obedience to divine law."[1]

This letter offers us a curious phenomenon: that of a man who fiercely hates his adversaries, with whom, instead, he ought to agree, because his thoughts and morals are the same as theirs, so much so that not being able to deny that they follow a direction much more in unison with his

[1] Julian., *op. cit.*, 552 sq.

own than that of his friends and partisans, he yet unhesitatingly declares them to be impostors, and persuades himself that, with these accusations, he has concealed the truth. But why this cordial hatred of persons with whom he ought to have agreed, and whom, notwithstanding his ferocious declamations, he endeavoured to imitate? Here we can only repeat the observation which is the result of the study we have undertaken. Julian felt that the God who had come from Palestine, or rather from Galilee, as he said, putting to flight, in the name of the new ideals, the gods born on the sacred soil of Hellas, would radically destroy Hellenism. And Hellenism, with all its complexity of tradition and culture, was too dear to Julian's heart for him to renounce it, and not to consider as his enemies those who were sapping its foundations. Wishing, therefore, to oppose the progress of the Galilean God who, he felt, responded more thoroughly to the wants of humanity, and was more living than all the gods of the ancient Olympus, Julian attempted to Christianise the gods of Greece and to introduce into polytheism the habits and moral discipline of which Christianity was, or, at least, ought to have been, the propagator. In this impossible undertaking, the young enthusiast demonstrates such an extraordinary force of conviction and will as to make him worthy of all respect; but, on the other hand, we cannot refrain from smiling when, in this most peculiar epistle, he speaks of the

priests of Bacchus and Aphrodite with an accent and exhortation that would not have been out of place on the lips of an Ambrose or of an Augustine when preaching to the clergy and faithful in their cities.

Julian wished, therefore, to institute a Pagan Church which should be modelled on the pattern, and still more on the precepts, of the Christian Church. But he wished that this Church should be independent and above the laws of the State, exactly as the Christian Church, at any rate on the side of Athanasian Orthodoxy, wished to be. This was a conception entirely new to Hellenism. In the Græco-Roman world temple and priest had always been at the service of the political power. And it was most natural that this should be, since religion was an institution, *par excellence*, national and politic. Rome insisted on the worship of the gods, not for metaphysical or sentimental reasons, but simply because, in the worship of the national divinities, they saw the affirmation of the dominating power of the Roman State. But genuine Christianity separated religion from the State, and made it an institution that was superior and independent. Now, from the letter to Arsacius, we see that Julian tended to give an equivalent position to reformed polytheism, and to consider religion as a power independent of the authority to which the State itself should be subjected. And this was also a consequence of the metaphysical transformation to which the gods of antiquity had been submitted

in the elaboration of Neo-Platonic mysticism. And we may conclude that if Julian had reigned twenty or thirty years, instead of only two, and if he had, by an impossible hypothesis, succeeded in his attempt at Christianising polytheism, the world would not have gained anything by it. The doctrine and religion of Julian, based on the supernatural, would, inevitably, have led to a theocracy, so that, instead of having a Catholic theocracy, we should have had instead a Mithraic theocracy.

But, in this letter, we recognise, after all, the discouragement of a reformer who has not been understood, and who has, in the final success of his enterprise, less faith than he cares to acknowledge. Julian's attempt was destined to fail from its very beginning, because it was absolutely illogical, and was, in itself, an irreconcilable contradiction. If it had been possible for polytheism to be Christianised, Christianity would not have arisen. The fundamental inspiration of polytheism was radically opposed to that of Christianity. Polytheism had, as a groundwork, the glorification of the world and of earthly life; Christianity, the detestation of both. Polytheism thought only of earth, and Christianity only of heaven. Polytheism was the religion of enjoyment and of force, Christianity of weakness and of sorrow. From these different points of departure there naturally arose habits, ideas, and tendencies

of teaching absolutely different. It was possible, or rather it was inevitable, that Christianity, in contact with the society of the times, should become corrupt, so that the virtues of which it was supposed to be the origin should be forced to find a refuge in monastic asceticism. But it was impossible that polytheism should abandon that which constituted its very essence, in order to assume forms and tendencies that were fundamentally repugnant to it. Christianised polytheism could only be Christianity. And it is for this that the polytheistic restoration, initiated by Julian, against which Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril of Alexandria have expended so much unnecessary fury, was, after all, but a passing meteor, which was extinguished without leaving in its wake the slightest evidence of its existence.

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